

FOURTEEN
SERMONS
On Various
SUBJECTS;
V I Z.

- | | |
|---|---|
| I. Of the Lent-Fast. | VIII. Of the Errors of the Church of Rome. |
| II. Against Atheism and Infidelity. | IX. Of Enthusiasm. |
| III. Of the Catholick Church. | X. Of Attending the Publick Worship. |
| IV. Of the Excellency of the Church of England. | XI. Of Frequenting the Holy Communion. |
| V. Of Baptism. | XII, XIII, and XIV. On the Passion of our Blessed Lord. |
| VI. Of Confirmation. | |
| VII. Of Confession and Absolution. | |

The First VOLUME.

Τὸς ἐνδοξοῦν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις.

By **BENJAMIN BATLT, M. A.**
late Rector of St. James's in BRISTOL.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. Wyat, W. and J. Inuys, and sold by J. Penn,
and W. Cofsley in Bristol. MDCCXXI.

FOURTEEN

SERMONS

On Various

~~SUBJECTS~~

VIZ

- I. Of the Last Day.
- II. Against Atheism and the Church of Rome.
- III. Of the Church of England.

THE Editor of these Sermons, living at a great Distance from the Press, desires the Reader would pass by any slips of the *London-Corrector*, which are not many.



By BENJAMIN BAKER, M.A.
late Rector of St. James's in Bristol.

LONDON.

Printed for J. WARD, W. and J. LEVY, and sold by J. BARNES, and W. COOPER in Pall-mall, MDCCLXXI.

12/5/21

- r -



strict and religious Observation of
the Law in this your native City of
BRISTOL; and I am apt to think
that we shall all be well pleased to

Edward Colston, Esq;

what the Rest of the Clergy here
have been doing, in their Turns, up-

SIR,

on the same Subjects.

THE Desire of the de-
ceased Author, and his
surviving Widow, these
DISCOURSES thus publickly wait
on you; hoping that, as they came
into Being by your Bounty, they
may be favourably received under
your Protection, and flourish with
your great Name.

The Dedication.

These are the *First Fruits* of that pious and useful *Lecture* which your Goodness founded, for the more strict and religious Observation of the *Lent* in this your native City of BRISTOL; and I am apt to think that we shall all be well pleased to have you estimate, by this Handsel, what the Rest of the Clergy here have been doing, in their Turns, upon the same Subjects.

It is much to be regretted, that the learned and judicious Author lived not long enough to go through the whole Number of the *Fourteen Sermons*, and especially to put his last and finishing Hand to these; (for it seems not to appear that he had made a correct Transcript of any
one

The Dedication.

v

one of them from the first Draught) nevertheless, the former Misfortune is, in some measure, supply'd by the Three Sermons which he has happily left upon the same Subject of our *Lord's* meritorious *Passion*; and the Latter will easily be allow'd for, and made up by that Candour which is essential to every good and christian Reader.

I need say nothing to satisfy the World, that they are his Discourses whose Name they bear; for they who had the Satisfaction of hearing them, will remember that they are *his*, which were wont to leave such an Impression behind them, as would not easily wear out: And I have let them come Abroad in their first and

The Dedication.

native Simplicity, being satisfied that I could not have attempted to give them any other Appearance or Turn, without the Peril of being found out by all discerning Persons, who were any Thing acquainted with his Manner of Speaking and Writing, in which there was a Sort of Peculiarity which fitted and became him so exactly well, that a moderate Critick might be almost certain, as well of what was not his own, as of what was.

He was a great Admirer and Master of the *Socratick* Way of Arguing; and, in all his Discourses, his Sense is substantial, his Reasoning sound, his Persuasion cogent, and his Words (*like the Words of the Wise*) are

The Dedication.

vii

as Goats, and as Nails fast'ned by the Masters of Assemblies, drove home, and clincht close. — But I shall say no more to anticipate and prepossess the Reader, who, after all, will take the Freedom of judging for himself.

But, SIR, I must trespass upon your Patience a little further, in regard I am apprehensive, that my *Brethren* may expect I should take this Occasion of saying something in relation to this *Lent-Lecture* it self, which was happily thought on, and founded by you: And tho' I may be thought guilty of a great *Strain* in what I am going to say, yet I will venture to speak out, because it is my Belief, (and I am not singular

A 4

gular in believing) that you have not, in any of your Benefactions, done more Good among us than in this.

They who consider how usefully and wisely you have appropriated all that you have been liberally laying out, in Works of Piety and Charity, for many Years; how various, extensive, and endless your Liberalities have been, and still are, and how small a Proportion this *Instance* of them bears to the Whole, will be apt enough to look hard at this Saying: But it is not wholly to be looked out of Countenance, altho' it should be thought largely said, seeing I am in some Degree, born out by the very Nature of the Good you have
here

The Dedication.

ix

here made Provision for, to wit,
the Observance of a most solemn
Ordinance of our Church, the Ser-
vice of our most Holy Religion, the
Worship of Almighty God, and the
Edification of Souls.

And it is, S I R, with Pleasure,
that I can assure you, the Church
continues still to be enliven'd, and
adorn'd with a full Congregation,
every *Lecture-day*, now, twelve Years
after the Novelty of the Thing and
of the Subjects has been overpast:
And you will easily perceive, by the
Length of these Discourses; that as
the *Clergy* have not thought much
of their Pains, in fitting themselves
for an *Hour's* Exercise, so neither have
the *People* been weary of lending
them

The Dedication

them an *Hour's* Attention : And such a Face of Seriousness and Devotion is beheld in these holy Assemblies, as shews, that *the Multitude is of one Heart and of one Soul*, in the Service ; nor is Religion any where seen to make a goodlier Figure, or to appear with a diviner Grace, or to exert it self with greater Earnestness and Sincerity ; which we esteem as the principal Recompence of our Labours : For, as it must cheer the Breast of every Votary with an holy Complacency and Satisfaction ; so it is a peculiar Joy and Comfort to those whose Business it is to bear their Parts and Turns in the Service, and to roll in this religious Duty.

And

The Dedication;

xi

And as the Subjects were of your own chusing, so the Publick will readily observe, that, in the Choice of them, you were not ignorant of what you were doing: They are select, important, and copious, singularly well adapted and aranged; they succeed each other in a Connection and Dependance, which is not difficult to be noted; they run upon the weightiest Points and Institutions of *Primitive Christianity*, and are perfectly well calculated to make the *Comers thereunto* well-grounded Christians, and well-affected Churchmen: And they are, for the most Part, capable of being so endlessly sub-divided, and branched out, that there is scarce any Part or Theme of Divinity, hardly any Grace or Ver-

tue

tue of our Religion, but what may be insisted on under some one or other of them: Nor need the Preacher ever want a fresh Topick of Discourse, as often as they shall come about to his Turn; unless he be covetous of comprehending all that can be said of each in a single Sermon, which unavoidably leads him to be too long and tedious upon the Whole, while he must be too hasty and superficial upon every Part; which is therefore the more unnecessary and imprudent, as these Subjects are like to be Unalterable and Perpetual. In a Word, it was not without the maturest Deliberation and Advice that you fashioned and digested this good Work, till you had finished it to your Mind; as
your

The Dedication.

xiii

your many judicious and excellent Letters on the Occasion can testify; which might, perhaps, as well deserve Perusal, as any of those Discourses they have laid the Foundation of. And must it not, SIR, administer a pleasing Reflection to your pious Soul, to think how generally Useful, and Beneficial it proves, and how Successfully it answers your godly Designs and Ends.

Hereby you have furnished your *Fellow-Citizens* with an Occasion and Method for distinguishing this solemn Season of the *Lent* from the Rest of their Time, and for observing it in such a religious Manner, as serves, we hope, to cast a kindly Influence and Blessing upon the

Reli-

The Dedication.

Religion of the whole Year: Here-
by you give the *Clergy* an Oppor-
tunity of instructing the People
(what if I had said themselves?) in
some of the most momentous Do-
ctrines of pure, and original Chri-
stianity, and of reviewing those an-
cient Authorities on which they are
grounded; and in a most particular
Manner, of observing, how exactly
our Church of *England* is model'd,
and built upon the Plan of the *Pri-
mitive Church* of CHRIST. To
speak freely, hereby you have made
it a Part of our Yearly Duty, to
open, and engage the Minds of the
People upon, some select Subjects,
which we could not otherwise have
made Choice of, in the ordinary
Course of our Ministry, without the

Censure

The Dedication.

XXV

Censure of being unreasonable, at least, if it stopt there: And, to say, all in a Word, if any Thing holds Infidelity, Libertinism, Profaneness, Heresy, and Schism at a Bay, and secures the Christian Religion from giving Ground among us, more may be owing (with the Grace of God) to the Efficacy and Influence of this solemn annual Exercise, than can be imagined: For which, and all your other Munificences, you have the Prayers of all honest and good People, *here*, continually; but more especially, as often as they are thus *occasionally* assembled by you in Publick Worship: And, surely, their Prayers are not unregarded by that Almighty and Gracious Being, who so marvellously preserves, and lengthens out
a Life

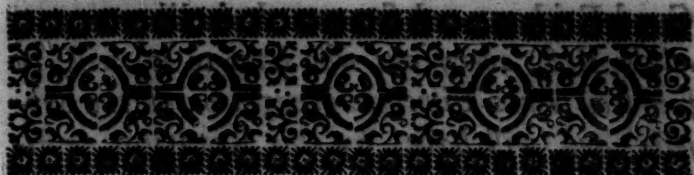
The Dedication.

a Life so beneficial, precious, and dear to us, as yours is. After this it is little to say, and yet I must not conclude without assuring you, that you have the unfeigned Thanks of all who fear God, and wish well to Religion, and particularly of, S I R,

Your most obliged, and

most humble Servant,

CH. BRENT.



Advertisement

TO THE READER.

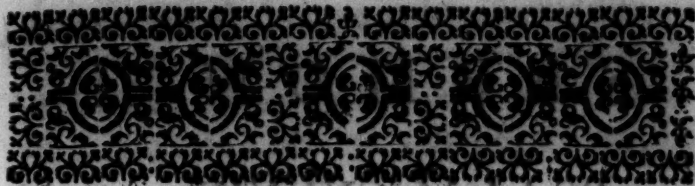
HIS LENT-LECTURE was found-
T ed by Mr. COLSTON, about twelve
E Years ago, the first Sermon, at the
 Opening of it, being preach'd at
 All-Saints, on Ash-Wednesday, March 9,
 1708. And Provision is made by him for a Ser-
 mon every Wednesday and Friday through-
 out the Lent, Fourteen in all; and the Paro-
 chial Clergy (which are usually near about that
 Number) take their Turns in the Service; the
 last Preacher reading Prayers for the next who
 succeeds him: And as they make one Remove for-
 ward in their Turns every Year, (the Preacher
 on Ash-Wednesday moving the next Year to

b

Good-

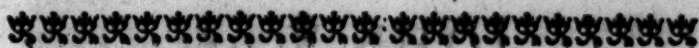
Good-Friday, and so onward, in like manner, all the Rest) every one who lives to it, will, in fourteen Tears Time, be engaged on all the Subjects, and will have, by this Rotation, a distinct and new One every Tear, 'till the Whole are gone over. The SUBJECTS, in the mean Time, are to remain fixed, unalterable, and perpetual in the following Order, viz. (beginning on Ash-Wednesday) 1. Of the Lent-Fast. 2. Against Atheism or Infidelity. 3. Of the Catholick Church. 4. Of the Excellency of the Church of England. 5. Of the Powers of the Church. 6. Of Baptism. 7. Of Confirmation. 8. Of Confession and Absolution. 9. Of the Errors of the Church of Rome. 10. Of Enthusiasm or Superstition. 11. Of Restitution. 12. Of Attending the Publick Worship. 13. Of Frequenting the Holy Communion. 14. Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord; ending on Good-Friday. Now, by this Account, the Lecture having subsisted but Twelve Tears, it happens that Two of the Subjects are wanting, in the Course of Sermons here published; which it is hoped, however, are not unacceptably supply'd.

T H E



THE

TEXTS.



SERMON I.

MATT. ix. 15.

And Jesus said unto them, Can the Children of the Bridechamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the Days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

P. 1.

b 2

SER-

S E R M O N II.**PSALM CXXXIX. 13.***— For I am fearfully, and wonder-
fully made.* 25**S E R M O N III.****JOHN X. 16.***And there shall be one Fold, and
one Shepherd.* 59**S E R M O N IV.****LUKE XI. 2.***When ye Pray, say, —* 97**S E R M O N**

S E R M O N V.

ROM. IV. 4.

*Therefore we are buried with him by
Baptism into Death.*

133

S E R M O N VI.

ACT. VIII. 14, 15, 16, 17.

*Now when the Apostles which were at
Jerusalem, heard that Samaria
had received the Word of God,
they sent unto them Peter and
John.*

*Who, when they were come down,
prayed for them that they might
receive the Holy Ghost.*

*(For as yet he was fallen upon none
of them : only they were baptized
in*

in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

*Then laid they their Hands on them,
and they received the Holy Ghost.*

163

S E R M O N VII.

2 COR. II. 7.

*Lest perhaps such a One should be
swallowed up with overmuch Sor-
row.*

195

S E R M O N VIII.

MARK VII. 9.

*And he said unto them, Full well ye
reject the Commandment of God,
that ye may keep your own Tra-
dition.*

231

S E R.

S E R M O N IX.

I COR. XIV. 37.

If any Man think himself to be a Prophet, or Spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the Things that I write unto you are the Commandments of the Lord.

269

S E R M O N X.

MATT. XVIII. 20.

For, where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the Midst of them.

303

S E R M O N XI.

I COR. XI. 26.

*For, as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew
the*

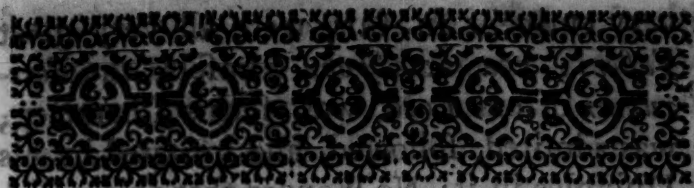
the Lord's Death till he come.

333

**S E R M O N S XII,
XIII, and XIV.****HEB. II. 10.***To make the Captain of their Salva-
tion perfect through Sufferings.*

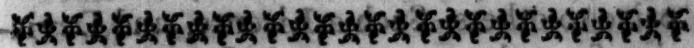
367, 393, 417.

**SERMON**



SERMON I.

Of the LENT-FAST.



MATTH. IX. 15.

And Jesus said unto them, Can the Children of the Bridechamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the Days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

THE Occasion of these Words Sermon I. the foregoing Verse discovereth. In the Time of our blessed Saviour's appearing in human Nature, the Jewish Professors affected very great Austerity, and Mortification of Life, and made mighty Shews of it: The Scribes and Pharisees were

Of the Lent-Fast.

Sermon very eminent in this, were all very great

I. *Fasters*; yea, and *John* himself, the *Forerunner* of our Lord, was of this Character; was admired, followed, and imitated by his Disciples in it: No Wonder that this raised, in the Generality of the Devout, the same Expectations from our blessed Saviour: And his not Conforming to the common Mode in this, nor often Imposing fasting upon his Followers, but Accepting of Invitations and Entertainments as Occasions offered, was Matter of Accusation to some, and of Surprise to others. Such a Licence, and Deviation from the common and established Rules of Sanctity, in those Days, even *John's* Disciples could not understand, and reconcile: Such a Disagreement as there manifestly appeared between their Master's, and our Saviour's Life, in their Opinion, must reflect upon one or other of them: If our Saviour was in the Right in this Indulgence, this exposed Fasting, and lessened the Vertue of their Master: If Fasting was good and commendable, this upheld the Character of the *Baptist*, indeed; but as much sunk our *Lord's*: Under this Entanglement they were; and with this View they seem to propose the Question before the Text.

The Answer of our Lord can never be sufficiently admired: *Can the Children of the Bride-chamber*

Of the Lent-Fast.

3

chamber mourn, while the Bridegroom is with them? In which our Saviour alludes to the Custom of the *Jewish* Marriages, at which, it was usual for the selectest Friends of the Bridegroom to attend, and rejoice with him several Days. And in this there was an exact Agreement: Our Saviour was the *Bridegroom*, the Church his *Spouse*, the Apostles were his most intimate Friends, or, *the Children of the Bride-chamber*: And, as it would be most absurd and ridiculous, to choose a Time of the greatest Joy and Feasting for Sorrow and Fasting, or to proclaim a Fast at a Wedding; so the Expectation of Mourning and Abstinence from the Apostles was as silly and improper, while their Master was present with them, while they beheld his Glory, had the Comfort of his Presence, of his Miracles, of his Instructions; no, a fitter Time abundantly would hereafter come for this, when they should be deprived of his Presence, should be harrassed, and persecuted with Evils; and then they would have Fasting enough.

In which, and the following Verses, ye see, our Saviour justifies himself and his own Disciples, without detracting, in the least, from the Vertue and Merit of *John*, or without passing any the least Discouragement or Reflection on Fasting; yea, he commendeth it in its proper Time and

Sermon Place; and, contrary to the Expectations of
 LI *John's* Disciples, leaveth their Master in
 the full Possession of that Veneration and
 Fame which his great Abstinence and Mor-
 tification had so justly procured him.

Upon these Words, I am to justify and
 recommend the present Fast, which our
 Church enjoins: And in order to it I shall
 shew,

First, Its Antiquity.

Secondly, Its Universality.

*Thirdly, With what View, and to what
 Ends it was at first enjoined.*

*Fourthly, How it was celebrated or perform-
 ed in ancient Time.* And,

First, Of the Antiquity of this Fast. Al-
 though the Governours of a Church have,
 from these Words of our Saviour, sufficient
 Authority at any Time, when they find
 Occasion, to command a *Fast*; yet, *this* was
 none of our own Church's Devising, but she,
 herein, only followeth the greatest and pu-
 rest Antiquity. It would look strange, I
 doubt, should one affirm it to be as ancient
 as the Christian Church it self; or, that it
 derived it self immediately from the Apo-
 stles; and yet, upon the most impartial
 Enquiry, it has the fairest Marks of *This*,
 that a Thing of this Nature can be capable
 of:

Of the Lent-Fast.

5

of: For, in no Age of the Church shall we find its Beginning, or Original: It springeth up from no Council, either general or particular; but look where ye will, in what Age soever, ye find it established among Christians. Quotations are dry, unaffecting Things; and I shall be as little vain, or troublesome with them as possible; but yet, they cannot be totally omitted, as the discerning Hearer will perceive, on such a Subject.

The Age of *Irenæus* is well known: He conversed with some who had conversed with the Apostles of our Saviour; and we have from him, in that famous and early Controversy about *Easter*, the fullest Testimony of the Authority of this Fast, that can be. It appeareth then, although the Bishops of the Catholick Church differed as to the Time, and Manner of celebrating it; yet, that they alledged apostolical Tradition, apostolical Authority, both for the Fast it self, and their different Customs; and this made them so difficult and stiff in receding from them. And of what great and holy Men was the Council, which discuss'd this, composed? *Narcissus*, *Victor*, *Irenæus*, *Polycrates*, &c. all Men of celebrated Characters and Names, even among the Moderns themselves, and living near the Time of the Apostles; and they tell us expressly,

Sermon this Fast was in being in their Time, was
 I. derived to them from their Predecessors. In
 the Book of the *Constitutions*, own'd by all
 very ancient, but by some *Apostolical*, the
 Apostles are introduced, as charging this
 Fast upon all Christians. It is usually, and
 with a great deal of Reason, said, That the
 Testimony of an Enemy is good. *Tertul-
 lian* was of this Sort; who, after he was
 turned Montanist or Heretick, and fol-
 lowed new Lights and Revelations, not-
 withstanding his bitter Enmity against the
 Catholicks, and in a Discourse wrote with
 the utmost Virulence against them, yet sub-
 scribes to the *Authority* and *Antiquity* of this
 Fast, and cannot blame his Enemies for obser-
 ving it. Thus it stood before the *Nicene Coun-
 cil*: It was not only in Being, but acknow-
 ledged as Divine and Apostolical.

The utmost Evidence of this Matter ap-
 peareth in the *Council* it self: An Assembly,
 doubtless, of the greatest, most learned, most
 holy, of the best Men, next to the Apo-
 stles, that ever lived. As to the Time of
 celebrating *Easter*, and consequently of this
 Fast, different Countries had, for many
 Years, divided, and indulged one another
 in different Practices; and no great Scandal
 ensued from it, but rather great Advantage
 and Reputation to the Church it self, as it
 implied the utmost Forbearance and Cha-
 rity.

Of the Lent-Fast.

9

rity. But, in the Time of *Constantine* the Sermon
Great, very unchristian Heats and Distur-
bances arose about it, exceedingly fit to be
suppressed. This admirably good, therefore,
and glorious Emperor and Christian, next
to the Suppression of the *Arian* Heresy,
laboured to reduce the Christian World to
an Uniformity of Practice in this Particu-
lar; and it became a peculiar Concern and
Decree of this famous Council: And what
is fit to be remarked from thence is this,
That among so many Bishops, of so remote
and different Countries, the Fast it self is
received and acknowledged by them all;
held absolutely necessary to be kept some
Time or other; and the Business of the Coun-
cil was only to determine *When*. To mention
other Authorities after this, is needless. This
brings me to

The *Second* Thing, the *Universality* of this
Fast. It was not observ'd by One, or a few
Churches, or Countries only, but by All.
Now, how a particular Custom should creep,
or be forced into a single Church, or Coun-
try, without any divine Warrant or Au-
thority, may be accountable enough; but
to suppose the whole Christian World co-
ming in, and zealously contending for a
Practice, without some general and univer-
sal Cause, is strange. Thus we argue in

Sermon
 I other Cases: For Example, The Generality of Men believe a God; there must, therefore, be some general, and universal Cause, or Principle, common to all Men, that suggests and encourages this Belief in them: So in the earliest Ages, all Christian Churches, without Exception, receive this Fast, express a great deal of Zeal about it; and, Can this be only a Whim, or Fancy? We may call it what we please, but we must not call it *Particular*, where the Effect is so *General*, so *Universal*; where it found it self in so many distant Countries and Churches, it must have one and the same Original and Authority: And, Where shall we find a better or more likely than the Institution of the Apostles?

And thus it was in the most early Ages of Christianity. It undeniably appeareth, the Fast was then among all Christians in Being: *Eastern* and *Western* Bishops, with great Zeal, profess and maintain it: And in the Council of *Nice*, the Decree supposeth, or rather asserteth evidently, That it was observed by the whole Christian World, although with some Variation of Time. To what must such an universal Practice be imputed, but to some Cause, or some Persons, that had Influence at first on the whole Christian World?

Thirdly,

Of the Lent-Fast.

09

Thirdly, I am to shew you *with what View*, Sermon
and to what Ends it was at the First enjoined:

I.

And this is very probably suggested in the Words of the Text, *But the Days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast, in those Days.* This was, doubtless, obeyed by the Apostles, and in a very particular Regard and Veneration was paid to this Time: For seeing it is clear from hence, that Fasting, in general, was agreeable to the Christian Institution, and it lay in the Breasts and Judgments of the Apostles to appoint fit Times and Seasons of it, What could present it self more proper to be chosen by them for such a Purpose, for Mourning and Humiliation, than their Master's Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion? Must they not reflect on this last, and dismal Scene of their Master? The exceeding Sorrow that then oppressed him? Must they not remember his Agony, his Sweating great Drops of Blood, his painful and dishonourable Death on the Cross? and, Must all This go uncelebrated by the Church? Could they forget their Master's Sufferings at this Time? yea, Could they forget their own? Into what Dejection and Heaviness, Confusion and Affrightment had the Seizing and Executing of him, thrown them? And if any Impressions of these Things

Of the Lent-Fast.

Sermon Things remained on them, Could they permit their Followers to feast, and rejoice, and revel at such a Time as *this*, when both they and the Saviour of the World, lay under such extraordinary Sorrow and Sufferings? This were absurd indeed, full as preposterous, as putting an old Piece of Cloth on a new Garment, or new Wine into old Bottles, which, instead of any wise End, would mar and bring all to nothing.

Neither is this bare Reasoning or Conjecture, but the current Doctrine of *Antiquity*: Seldom is this Fast mentioned in the earliest Writers, but *this* is assigned the End, and the Reason of it. It is true, indeed, in latter Ages, when the Fast began to be extended to Forty Days, there are Expressions which imply it instituted in Memory of our Saviour's Fasting in the Wilderness; but even, according to these Authors, the Church's Pitching upon this particular Time for it, was owing to the Crucifixion of our Saviour.

Upon this Foot and Authority is grounded the Practice of our own Church: She leaveth not uncommemorated the Fasting of our Saviour, but more Particularly solemnizes his Passion and Crucifixion: In which, Who can but admire her Wisdom and Moderation? but of this more hereafter.

Things

I come

Of the Lent-Fast.

11

I come to the *Fourth* and *Last* Thing, to Sermon
shew how it was celebrated and observed in
the ancient Church. I have hinted already, I.
that in different Countries and Churches,
both as to the Time and Manner, it was
performed with some Variety: They fasted
not all at the same Time, exactly, nor in
the same Manner, but some were shorter,
and others longer; to reconcile which, the
Endeavours of learned Men have been em-
ployed, how successfully I cannot say; but
the Best of it is, it is no great Matter whe-
ther they have been able to solve this Dif-
ficulty, or not: For what great Hurt is here?
What great Disparagement, that, in Coun-
tries so different and remote, a Fast, aiming
at the same End, instituted to the same Pur-
pose, should be observed with some little
Variation in Point of Time? How easily
might Mistakes creep in, as to such Circum-
stances, and especially when we consider
the Inaccuracy of former Ages, as to the
Business of Calculation? These Things are
meer Trifles.

But, if ye will accept of Authority lower
than that of the *Nicene* Council, ye have
all ye can wish; ye have the utmost Uni-
formity after this; the Fast observed at the
same Time, continued to the same Length;
ye have your *Quadragesima*, full *Forty Days*,

as

Sermon
 I.

as it standeth now in our Church : Ye hear of no Opposition but from *Jews* and *Montanists*, about this Matter : Ye have many holy, and excellent, and godly Purposes intended and promoted by it : Ye see the whole Church of God in Mourning at this Time, confessing their Sins, deprecating divine Judgments, remembring, with utmost Sorrow, the Ablation of the *Bridegroom*, the Crucifixion of their Lord, and Participating with him in his Disgrace, in his Sufferings, and Death; and with great Reason and Propriety : For should the *Spouse* of CHRIST rejoice, or remain unconcerned, when she was left desolate ; when the *Bridegroom* was apprehended, was tried, was condemned, was spit on, was buffeted, nailed to the Cross, was crucified, laid dead in the Grave? No ; a more ardent Love and Faithfulness possessed the Church *Then* ; and that it is otherwise *Now*, is owing to absurd and Phantastical Notions, to a *Lukewarmness*, or rather downright *Coldness* that the *Spouse* hath contracted.

The Description of the Devotion of those Days is great, and extraordinary ; the Attendance of the Bishops, their Exhortations to the People, the Preparation and Instruction of the Converted for Baptism, the Confessions and Humiliations of the Penitents, and Candidates for Absolution ; in a
 Word,

Word, the Sorrow, and the Repentance of Sermon
all the Faithful, the Examination of their **L**
Lives, and the Mortification of their Cor-
ruptions, in order to purge and cleanse their
Souls of all unfit Dispositions to receive the
Holy Ghost, which they expected afterwards;
these seem, in general, to have been the Em-
ployment of Christians, in early Days; and,
doubtless, must give the Christian Church
a most solemn Appearance, strike others
with a great Awe and Veneration, and
draw down upon it the divine Assistance and
Blessing.

I shall now make some Reflections upon
the Whole, and conclude. And,

I. This Discourse affords us a fair Occa-
sion to reflect on the singular Wisdom,
Learning, and Vertue of our first *Reformers*.
Reformation is a Thing that most Men are
fond, but few capable of: For it is no
easy Work, especially to reform a Church
of so many hundred Years standing as the
Christian Church is. What Compass of
Learning, what exact Knowledge in Anti-
quity, what Profoundness of Judgment,
what an impartial, unbiass'd Mind doth
this require? Any of these Things wanting
(and how seldom are they all found in the
same Men?) must produce most miserable
Work in a Church.

The

Sermon. The Prejudices and Weaknesses of Men, in this World, are Matter of great Concernment and Lamentation. Ask any Man, bred up in never so absurd Principles and Worship, as to the Goodness and Excellency of his Church and Religion, he will straight commend and extol it highly, will appear under no Pain as to that Matter, but will stile it the very best in the World. Such a fatal Influence hath Education upon the Minds of Men, and so little of true Examination is there going, and so seldom are Men determined by it. But, in the midst of this strong implicit Faith of Men about the Goodness and Excellency of their Church, suppose a Member of any Christian Society, endowed with sufficient Capacity, Learning, Leisure, Vertue, and all other Things requisite to form an upright Judgment, looking back into the primitive Records of Christianity, perusing diligently and faithfully the best and the earliest Books on this Subject; and if the Result should be, that he should find nothing in those ancient Monuments corresponding to the Model of his own Church, no Authorities for it, but all against it; and the farther, and more narrowly the Man examined, still the Worse and the Darker it groweth upon him, the more Unlikeness is still found; notwithstanding such a Man being bred up in all the

the Fondness and Zeal imaginable for his Sermon
own Church, yet certainly such a Discovery
must prove a Disappointment to him,
must raise in him an inward Uneasiness and
Shagrin; for Truth here opposes his Zeal,
and either he must part with his Church, or
Truth, either of which is troublesome.

Had the Reformers of our own Church
been so unlucky, unlearned, unskilful; had
they been no wiser Builders, laid no better
a Scheme; had they been ignorant, or De-
fiers of the ancient Church; had they been
unversed in Antiquity; had they paid no
Deference to the most ancient and best esta-
blished Usages and Customs of the univer-
sal Church; had they discarded, for Exam-
ple, this Fast, decry'd it, as others would
have had them, as popish and superstitious;
in a Word, had they attempted, through
Ignorance or Prejudice, to make their Church
as unlike the Catholick as possible, when in
its greatest Purity and Perfection, and usher-
ed their Work into the World with the pom-
pous Title of Reformation: I say, if this
had happened, What Difficulties must have
arose, in After-time, upon its learned, in-
quisitive, and impartial Sons? What Trou-
ble and Vexation must their After-discove-
ries have given them? How must they have
wink'd at one another, and blush'd, if they
had

Sermon had the Grace, at such a sad Mistake or Pre-
 I. varication?



But, Thanks be to God, no learned, ingenious, vertuous Son of the Church can say this; we are under no such Difficulties nor Temptations; our Difficulties are not to hide the Truth, but to speak it out: The Reformation only wanteth in Men true Enquiry, true Learning, Impartiality, Integrity, and a Neglect of this World, to justify it self to them; and the more Men have of these, and the deeper and exacter their Enquiries are, with the greater Love and Admiration will they be possessed of their own Church.

How can it be otherwise, when a Man traces our Reformers, their Knowledge and Profoundness, Skill and Diligence every where, when, in no Branch of Learning, no Book of Antiquity, can he enquire, but he finds the Reformers have been there before him, and were expert Masters in it? What an indifferent Thing do we commonly account *Lent*? Yet, upon Examination, upon what great Reason and Authority is it built? And had our Church been destitute of this Fast, it, sure, must have been a great Blemish to her: Blemish, did I say? a grievous Error and Offence; and such as must have been amended, as she valued the Voice and Practice of the Catholick Church, in the
 purest

purest Ages of it: And this the Reformers Sermon
 saw; and how must this, and such like I.
 Things endear *them*, and their *Works* and
Memories to us.

II. From this we may remark, the different Spirit with which Christians were animated in ancient Days, from what they are now: If we have given a right Account of this Fast, certainly a mighty Reverence must the Christians have had for the Orders and Injunctions of the Church in former Ages; otherwise, how can we account for the Universality of its Observation, for the Strictness with which it was kept; for the Sanctity which was imputed to it? This must all flow from a Spirit of Obedience in the Members of the Catholick Church, from a high Regard to its Commands, which produced so great an Uniformity in Practice.

If we view this Matter now, What a strange and different Figure doth the Christian World make, in this respect? at least, What a different poor Figure doth *Protestantism* make in this Way? Are all Protestants in different Countries, in perfect Unity? yea, are all Protestants of the same Faith, of the same Country, in Agreement about this? quite the reverse. And, for no other Reason, as far as I could ever see, and as sometimes it hath been declared by themselves,

Sermon selves, (and marvellously wise Declarations they are) than because it is observed by some; because the Church ordains it, therefore they despise and reject it. Good Lord! What a different Turn is here upon the Minds and Spirits of Christians? What different Measures, and Rules of Duty are here? Commands and Orders of the Church, in ancient Time, were thought great Things, great Engagements upon all Christians; but now there are Men start up amongst us, who tell us it is all a Jest. Now Obligations operate contrary Ways, and the Commanding of a Thing is made the strongest Argument of *Disobeying* it: And that which possibly they might have done of their own Accords, they cannot do now, in Point of Duty and Conscience, because commanded. Is not this rare Reasoning, rare Christianity and Charity? If this be really the Case, may not the *Roman* Church well laugh at our Reformation? For, instead of a *Christian*, Was there ever such an *absurd* and *awkward* Spirit as this? But what talk I of this, when greater Things than these, than *Lent* or *Easter*, are exploded as mere Trifles and Nullities, by no common Members of our own Church? And upon such poor and empty Sophistry as this, because the Reformers took the Liberty of examining into the Errors and Corruptions of the *Roman* Church, therefore every Mem-ber

Of the Lent-Fast.

19

ber of the *Reformed* Church may do the same, explode the Doctrines and Injunctions of his own Church, and with the utmost Safety to himself, if he should take a Fancy so to do, whether there be equal Reason for it, or not, for all is just as particular Belief or Fancy takes it. The Man is as safe in the Belief and Profession of Error, as of Truth, and in demolishing Christianity, as in supporting it: And so, according to this Doctrine, *St. Paul* was as acceptable to God, when a Persecutor of Christianity, as after his Conversion, and when become an Apostle, and heavenly Ambassador and Teacher of it. But we are taught to say, These are the best Friends to the Protestant Religion and the Government, and Foes to Popery; and we only add, pray God they prove so! But notwithstanding such Amusements as these, I hope we may go on in our old Way.

III. We hence adventure to recommend this Fast to the true Members of our own Church. We see upon what it is grounded, The earliest Records of the Church; I had almost said, the Institution of the Apostles. In no Age doth it appear, but the Church hath universally observed it: It is retained and enjoined by our own Church. What Obligations are these upon us, to distinguish

Sermon it with some Marks of Respect and Honour?
 I. but this is not all —

A Life of Piety can hardly subsist without some particular and set Times of Examination and Recollection. Who hath not Sins and Miscarriages to lament, Vertues and Graces to improve? What Christian is not bound to fix on his Mind the Life, the Sufferings, and Death of his Saviour? and, Can we have a properer Time for these holy and devout Exercises, than when the Church commands and contributes towards it; than when we follow the Example of the purest Church? St. Paul's Precept is, *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and mourn with them that mourn*: What? and will we chuse to mourn when others rejoice? Or never trouble our Heads with these Matters, be never serious or reflect at all?

How full of Pleasure, of Business, and deep Engagement is the World? And how prudent is the Church in appointing some Times of Avocation and Retreat, of Thoughtfulness and Retirement, of examining into our spiritual Estate, of imprinting on us the greatest and most momentous Subjects? And how thankfully should every Body receive and embrace these Opportunities that the Church affords him? An Insensibility of
 this,

this, I doubt is much owing to Want of a Sermon
sober and due Sense of Religion.

I.

The Church of God anciently was esteem-
ed the School of all divine Vertue and Grace,
wherein the Souls of Men were trained up,
and prepared for everlasting Life; and as
other Places were Seminaries of Learning
and Philosophy, renowned for the great
Men in that Way, that issued from them;
so the Business and Profession, the Reputa-
tion and Glory of the Church was, to cure
the Disorders of Men's Minds, and send
them forth the most accomplished in all Ver-
tue; but this could not be without Disci-
pline. Will a Soldier be hardy, endure great
Extremities of Cold and Want, in the Ar-
ticles of Danger and Engagement, if never
inured to these Hardships in the Camp, if
they are not imposed often on him by his
General? So said an early Father on this
very Subject, and at this very Time, and to
the Persons exercising of this very Vertue.
How easy is Want and Hunger under Per-
secution, and Imprisonment for the Cause of
CHRIST, which was frequently their Case,
when you are so inured to them, and so of-
ten practise them in the Church? here is no
Change, almost in your Condition: But on
the contrary, in a Life of perpetual, world-
ly Pleasure, Dalliance, and Enjoyment, How

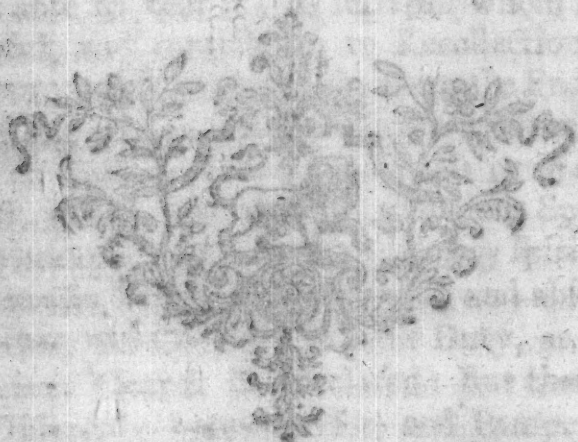
Sermon will ye endure such Hardships? The Argument will not reach us, indeed, in regard to Persecution; but, Whose Circumstances are above the Reach of Fortune? Who may not be reduced to Want and Poverty? And if such a Turn should happen, Will the Church have done amiss in enabling us to bear it? To conclude.

When I speak of *Fasting*, all Men will understand me, as speaking to such only as are able to bear it; to such for whom it is useful, and contributes to Recollection, to Piety, and Devotion, which are the Ends of Fasting. To enjoin Mortification of the Body on such as, through Sickness or Weakness, are so low already, that their Spirits are incapable of Attention, or any spiritual Exercises, were most improper, and absurd: Rather, the Contrary is their Duty, as the ancient Church has declared: But there is a Difference between this, and Pampering and Indulging the Body; the Using of it to such Excess, as to put it out of all Reach and Command of the Soul. Who can doubt but perpetual Fulness is a Clog upon the Mind and its Operations, is Fuel to many Lusts? And where we find this, Let us pursue the Methods that the Word, and Church of God enjoins us: Let us cast out these unclean Spirits, by Fasting; Let us *abstain*
from

from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul ; Sermon
 Let us not make Provision for the Flesh, to I.
 fulfil the Lusts thereof : And, to our Fasting
 and Prayer, add Charity, Mercy, and For-
 giveness, as we hope, God, for Christ's sake,
 will forgive us.



from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Sermon
 Let us not make Provision for the flesh, to
 fight the lusts thereof: And, to our fasting
 and prayer, add Charity, Mercy, and For-
 giveness, as we hope, God for Christ's sake
 will forgive us.



SERMON

SERMON II.

Against A T H E I S M and
I N F I D E L I T Y.

PSALM CXXXIX. 13.

*For I am fearfully, and wonder-
fully made.*

THE Knowledge of God is Sermon
most necessary and useful, II.
A so the Almighty hath not left
his own Being to a single Dis-
covery, to one single Argu-
ment or Demonstration, but
many Ways is it derived to us, many
Things serve to excite it. If we look abroad
into the World, What a pregnant Testimo-
ny

Sermon ny is this of the Being and Perfections of

II. God? *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work.* What maintains the Constancy and Regularity of the Motions of these Orbs? *The Earth is full of his Riches, and so is the great and wide Sea also, wherein are Things creeping innumerable, both small and great Beasts.* The most contemptible Animal or Plant, which the Earth contains, yieldeth a most invincible Demonstration of an invisible and eternal Cause, and inculcates this Doctrine on all rational Creatures. Thus it is when we look about us, all Objects, every Thing we see, or meet, or hear, upon whatsoever we cast our Eyes, or entertain our Thoughts, it suggests the Being of a God.

Neither when we are most retired or recollected within our selves, are we less minded of this great Truth; we have no need to go abroad to acquire this Knowledge, but we may learn it at home, it is nigh us, even in our Hearts; I am not afraid to say, it is innate, imprinted there, by the Finger of God; as hard to be expunged or erased, as any Thing that is natural. But if we should not allow this, we have many other Arguments within us of the divine Existence; our Nature yieldeth other undeniable Proofs from whence, or from what Cause we spring, and to whom we are indebted for our Being, and

and Faculties: Our Endowments, both of Sermon
Body and Mind, are great and various, and II.
serious Reflections upon them will extort
from us the Conclusion in the Text, *I am*
fearfully, and wonderfully made.

Upon which Words I shall, in Imitation
of the *Psalmist*, do these two Things.

First, I shall make some short and general
Observations upon the Endowments of
our own Nature.

Secondly, I shall examine, Whether what
we find within our selves, the Facul-
ties and Endowments of our Nature,
Body, and Mind, will demonstrate,
That the all-wise and tremendous God
was our Maker. For *I am fearfully and*
wonderfully made.

I. I am to make some general Observa-
tions on the Endowments of our own Na-
ture, both in regard to our Bodies and
Minds.

1. For our Bodies. And here it will not
be expected that I should treat this Subject
as an *Anatomist*, and, with much Exactness,
describe the several Parts of a human Body;
as I am incapable of this, so would it be
impro-

Sermon II. improper to the Time and Place: My only Care must be, not to appear absurd to the Curious in this Faculty, nor unedifying to the less Knowing. And that, I think, Hints, and general Descriptions will best secure.

And, probably, the divine Penman himself might be no perfect Anatomist, and yet he knew enough of this Subject to raise in him Surprise. *I am fearfully, says he, and wonderfully made*; when he reflected upon his own Faculties, the Delicacy, the Order, the Wisdom, and Contrivance of his own Frame, it struck him with Wonder and Astonishment. Neither is he singular in this, but other of the inspired Writers join with him. *Job* is magnificent in his Description of this Matter — *Thy Hands have made and fashioned me together round about; hast not thou poured me out like Milk, and crudled me like Cheese? Thou hast clothed me with Skin and Flesh, and hast fenced me with Bones and Sinews.* The Contrivance and Wisdom appearing in a human Body, hath not only very much affected the Devout, but captivated Men of a different Spirit, and hath been celebrated by the Pens of the ablest Heathens. How often hath *Galen* been confounded at this? and, What Flights hath he left upon it.

And

And, indeed, What wonder? For, How many Things in our Nature, even to the most Knowing, appear mysterious and unaccountable? Notwithstanding this has been a Subject, That has been most diligently studied, That has employed the Wit of great and able Men in all Ages, and no Cost and Pains have been spared about it, it is to be feared that many Things yet remain a great Secret. Discoveries of great Importance have, doubtless, been made; but yet, Are there none to be made? The most Curious know how this Matter stands, and what a Riddle their own Beings are yet to them. And here I speak not of those Things that are already given up, as too hard for human Understandings; such as the Union between Soul and Body, the principal Seat of the Soul, the Soul's acting upon the Body, how Sensation is performed, &c. I say, I speak not of such [unscrutable Points as these, but of others, one would think more obvious, and within the Compass of the Talents of Men; and of this Sort, there are many; I'll adventure at an Instance or two.

To begin with *Digestion*. This is the Foundation of all Life, Health, and Strength in Creatures, the first great Operation of Nature, upon which all the Rest depends. Yet, as common a Thing as this is, is it
per-

Sermon perfectly understood by the Learned, from
 II. what Causes it proceeds? Whether from One
 or Many? Whether by a Heat or Fermentation only, or by a *Menstruum* or Liquor? If by the Latter, Hath any Man yet discovered the Nature of that Liquor or *Menstruum* which dissolves the Food? or, Can any Chymist, Physician, or Anatomist imitate it, or prepare the Like? This would be a noble Discovery indeed; when Nature was decayed, and could afford no longer the Means of Digestion and Nutrition, Art could! Of what Esteem would such a Medicine be? Of what Advantage to the World? And yet if such a Thing be, it is, perhaps, as remote from human Discovery, as the Philosopher's Stone.

Pass we on to the *Blood*, which, by the Help of Organs, is formed out of our Food; and, surely, this is a strange Liquor, for out of it, undeniably, are formed and repaired all the Parts of our Bodys; out of *This* are made Spirits, Nerves, Muscles, Bones, and all the Solids, as well as Fluids. And, What a Compound is the Body of Man? Made of how many different dissimilar Parts? and yet, That one Liquor should supply All; repair; answer the Ends of All; is, I fancy, a Contrivance, that must appear wonderful to the most Knowing in that Faculty.

This

This last Age hath discovered the Circulation of the Blood, and this Discovery (as all other good Ones do) since it is made, appears so obvious, that one would wonder what the World, for so many Ages, had been doing. Well! but now, since the Discovery is made, and the Fact appears incontestable, Can any Man assign, with Certainty, the Cause of it? Yes, the Heart. But what gives the Heart this Motion, its *Systole and Diastole*, as learned Men term it? Men have offered plausible Conjectures about this, but the different, repugnant Sentiments of the Curious, exclude Certainty and Demonstration here. But let this be no longer a Secret neither; I dare say, whosoever is admitted into it, shall not cease to admire the Wisdom of the Design; and his Knowledge, instead of abating (as in other poor Things) will encrease his Admiration.

What a common Thing is *Respiration*, or Breathing? And yet there is more of Mystery, more of Art and Curiosity in this, than common Men dream of; I might add, than the Ingenious can well explain.

I must not stay to instance in many other Particulars, deemed less rare and surprising, which yet, when the Men of Art come attentively to consider, and undertake

Sermon take to account for, they find Difficulty and

II.

Entanglement enough in.

What a Scene doth the Anatomist open to our View, when he sheweth us the marvellous Structure of human Bodies! When the Joining and Locking of the Bones is discovered! When the Arteries, the Veins, the Nerves are traced! What a Piece of elaborate and curious Work is the Brain! How much of these Things, by reason of their exquisite Fineness and Delicacy, is altogether undiscoverable by us! and yet so much appears, as to strike us with Surprise and Admiration.

To conclude this Head: What a strange Invention are the Senses, and especially the Sight and Hearing! I speak not so much here of the Organs, by which outward Objects are admitted, (although surprisngly fine and curious, for, What a Contrivance is the Eye! How marvellous in its Structure and Frame!) but of the Design its self. And as to what we term *Sight*, That the different Motions and Stroaks of some very subtil Matter upon the optick Nerves, should let in upon us the Knowledge of the Universe; should make Discovery of Objects at such remote Distance; should lay open to us the Wonders and Riches of Nature; affect us with such various and delightful Colours and Sentiments; Is not all this

this wonderful? And especially when we consider it in its Causes? That the Bottom, I say, of all this, according to the best Accounts, should be nothing but the Action of fine Matter upon the Organ of Sight; That this should make such a glorious Display, should let in upon the Soul such innumerable Objects; How marvellous is this! What a vast Distance are we from the fixt Stars! and, How came we to know there are such Objects? How came there any Communication or Correspondence between Things at such an immense Distance? It is really surprizing there should be any at all; but that delicate Stroaks or Touches of a refined Body (which we term Light) should perform all this, convey all this Knowledge to us, establish this Intercourse; if I mistake not, the more any Man considers this, the more wonderful it will appear to him.

What shall we say of *Hearing*? Of what Use as well as Delight is this Sense? without it, How difficult and unedifying would human Society and Conversation have been? What imperfect Discovery of Thoughts? and, What a heavy, dull, melancholy Thing would human Life have been, when sound Sense, Sharpness of Wit, and other noble Talents of the Soul, had been communicable only by Looks, and Motions of

Sermon the Hands and Feet? Upon Hearing depends Speech, Language, Eloquence, Politeness, good Breeding, and many other Sciences; and, What a poor Figure would human Nature have made without these? yea, How should we have wanted Musick? for, What Charms hath this? How variously doth it affect the Soul? How many Passions doth it inspire?

Who hath not felt the Power of agreeable Sounds, or can stand insensible at them? What a Help, as well as Ornament is this to human Life? yea, What a Help to Devotion? But when a Man considers upon *what*, all this Good, all this Pleasure depends; upon *what*, Speech, Eloquence, Logick, Musick, with all its various Notes; I say, when a Man reflects, that all these arise from a peculiar and different Motion, or Undulation of the Air, That *this* is the Medium of conveying Thoughts, and of so differently affecting the Soul; Must not the Contrivance hereof appear most amazing? It does to me, I confess. A wonderful Contrivance, indeed, is the Body of Man! A wonderful Machine, not only in its self, but in regard to other Things, to the Universe, of which it is a Part: When the Motions of the Light, and of the Air, shall raise such instructive, delightful Sensations in us! How nicely adapted must
our

our Organs be to the Universe, to receive these regular and noble Impressions from it? *Sermon II.*

Proceed we now to make some other Observations upon the other Part of our Nature, our Soul. And, notwithstanding so much Art is laid out upon our Bodies, and they appear such curious Machines, yet of a far more noble and exalted Nature is the Soul. How little, in comparison, this outward Frame of our Bodies is valued by our Maker, appears, in that great Degrees of the same Wisdom are shewn and display'd in the Bodies of Brutes, which are intended only for a very short and uncertain Duration; which, abundantly demonstrateth, how much Wisdom soever appeareth in the Composition of animate and inanimate Things, yet it beareth no Proportion to the divine Understanding; for it is all bestowed upon short-liv'd perishing Subjects. But of the Soul, God himself, as well as our own inward Sense and Experience, teacheth us to think, and speak more highly and honourably. If we consider its Faculties and Endowments, Must we not deem it of a different Substance from the Body? Even what we have been here discoursing of, concerning the Body, methinks, yieldeth a strong and pregnant Proof of it. For, Do we not reason upon

Sermon all the Parts of our own Bodies? Upon
 II. the Nerves, upon the Brain, upon the sub-
 tilest and finest Organs? Do we not strictly
 examin them; take them all afunder; consider their Uses and Ends? Methinks I reason upon my own Body, with the same Freedom and Disengagement, as upon any other Piece of Clock-work, never so different from me. Am I, therefore, and my Body one Thing, one Substance? Doth my Body, therefore, thus reflect upon, anatomize it self? Should any Man say, That your Leg is your Soul, or your Arm your Soul, Would you believe it? Were not the Propositions ridiculous? But is it a Whit easier to say, The Brain is the Soul; or, The animal Spirits the Soul? It is all shocking to common Sense.

Supposing any Man should say, That a Horse and his Rider, a Ship and the Mariner were the same Thing; How could one confute such absurd Assertions, but by shewing the different Faculties and Operations of these two Things? That the Rider commanded, governed the Horse; the Mariner the Ship. But does not the Soul do the same to the Body, govern, direct, use, controul its Motions? and yet, Is not the Soul different from the Body? For my Part, I declare it, I should as soon believe the Horse and his Rider the same Thing, as the

the Soul and Body. But to return to our Sermon Subject.

II.

How curious soever the Body is framed, all would be lost without this noble Inhabitant, the Soul. It is the Soul that discovers the curious Contrivance of the Body, it is the Soul that is the *Anatomist*, the *Surgeon*, the *Physician*, *Mathematician*, the *Metaphysician*, *Divine*, and what not? It is the Soul that comprehends all Arts and Sciences, and it is not a Few that she comprehends, which sheweth, (although inclosed in corruptible Flesh) its divine Nature, and Energy. When she measures the Heavens, considers their Motions, calculates Eclipses, (as ye have seen of late with what Exactness) when she reasons of Eternity, of the divine Nature; when ye consider her noble Faculties and Endowments, her Will, her Understanding, her Memory, by which such a vast Stock of Knowledge is acquired and retained, so many useful and noble Arts and Sciences are struck out and improved; when ye think of this, Can ye fancy the Subject of all this Knowledge, the Inventer, the Retainer of it, is the Body; is nothing but Brain and Spirits? For certain, as well may Knowledge lie stored up in a Coffer, as in the Brain, or in any other corporeal Thing. But of this we

but in modern times D 3

Sermon may have Occasion again to speak to, here-
 II. after.

I pass on to the *Second* General Head, to consider, Whether what we find within our selves, the Faculties and Endowments of our Body and Mind, will evince, That they had nothing less than what we term God, for their Contriver and Maker.

And this, I think, standeth upon three self-evident Propositions, That we had a Beginning, That we had a Cause of our Beginning and Existence, That an Effect can have no other, no higher or greater Perfections than its Cause communicated to it.

I. We had a Beginning. I suppose no One will deny This; at least, as to our Nature, in its present Form and Condition, as it is made up of such a Body and Mind: Should any Man be bent on cavilling, and fancy, that the Matter and Parts of his Body and Mind, pre-existed before their Union, let him enjoy his Conceit; this hurts not us, if he allows (as he must allow) that the present Make and Structure of his Body, the present Order and Arrangement of Parts, as well as the Faculties of his Mind, as they now appear to him, be modern, and
 of

of a very late Beginning and Extraction. Sermon
This every Man must allow; and this is II.
abundantly enough to our Purpose. We will

suppose then this a clear Point, That our
Minds, as to their present Way of Think-
ing and Operation; and, That our Bodies,
as to their present Disposition, and Orga-
nization of Parts, had a Beginning; or, in
other Words, That we have not been eter-
nally in this present Form or Fashion, have
not lived eternally on Earth. If we are as
certain of other Things as we are of this,
I hope we shall carry the Point. I despair
not: I appeal to your selves: Be only equal
Judges. I advance.

Seeing we had a Beginning, we must
have had a Cause of our Being and Ex-
istence.

This is the 2d Thing, which is self-evi-
dent. This Cause cannot be our selves, for
then we should Be before we Are, or Be and
not Be, which implies a Contradiction.
The Cause therefore of our Being and Ex-
istence, of all our Perfections of Body and
Mind, must be somewhat in Being before,
and different from, our selves.

Whatsoever this Cause be, it must have
had all the Perfections, either *formally*, or

Sermon *eminently*, of the Effects which we feel in
 II. our selves, which is the 3d Point. By formally, or *eminently*, I understand, That the true Cause of any Thing must contain in it self all the Perfections, which the Effect possesses, either in the *same*, or in a *higher*, or more *noble* Kind, and Degree. Otherwise it would communicate or confer on another That which it had not it self, which is impossible.

To the Purpose. Admitting the Conceit, That an Effect can have greater Perfections than its Cause. The Advantage or Perfection, which the Effect has beyond its Cause, Whence did it come derived? Not from its Cause (for that is supposed to be without it) but from some other Thing. And this again implies a Contradiction; for it imports, or rather makes it a Cause, and no Cause.

If these Maxims, and self-evident Propositions fail us not (and if they fail us, human Reasoning is, in vain, urged about any Thing) it is sure that our own Beings yield a clear Demonstration of the Being of a God.

For have we not Bodies of a most admirable Make and Contrivance? How much Wisdom is bestowed upon them? indeed, vastly more than we can comprehend. And again: As to our Souls, Are they not endowed with Understanding; with divers spiritual Faculties? and, Must not the

Cause

Cause of these be a marvellously spiritual, Sermon and wise, and powerful Agent? and, What II.
can this be but God? ~~~~~

Although I take this to be as evident as any Reasoning can be, and to require no farther Prosecution, yet, to raise in us a greater Scorn of atheistical Principles, I will briefly compare them with what hath been before said. Contraries best illustrate one another, and the utmost Stupidity and Nonsense sets forth Truth, and makes the clearest Demonstration.

Instead of imputing their Beings and Endowments to a God, atheistical Men have devised *three* principal Things, either *Chance*, *Nature*, or the *Eternity* of human *Generations* for their Original.

Some have fancied they sprung (Body and Mind) from Chance. But, What is this Thing called *Chance*? Has it Life, or Knowledge, or Wisdom in it? None of these. It is a blind accidental Concurrence of Causes. What? and, Can such a Thing as this make the Eye, make the Ear? In short, make an human Body, with all its Parts, and Dependencies, and Operations? How many Things are consulted in a human Body? How many Things are subordinated, and conspire to the same End? and, Does *Chance* all this? Can That, which has no Understanding, produce most wise and regular Effects?

Sermon Effects? Can That, which has no *Life*, pro-

II. duce such innumerable *living Things*?
 ~ That, which has no Reason, produce Things
 endowed with such sublime Faculties
 and Talents of Reason? It is surely
 a grand Shame to human Reason, That
 ever such Stuff should be uttered by Crea-
 tures professing it, and much more, That
 it should be admired and called Philoso-
 phy, by others. The Inventers of this
 Talk, much better deserved Confinement,
 than Names, and Places of Honour, and
 Distinction in the Schools. Should com-
 mon Men talk at this Rate, reason so wild-
 ly and extravagantly in the common Af-
 fairs and Concernments of this Life; Who
 doubts what they would be deemed? And
 if this be Philosophy, *Bedlam* abounds with
 it. Let no Man think this hastily spo-
 ken. For if meer Chance can produce such
 marvellous Things, can produce the noblest
 Order and Regularity; if hence can spring
 human Bodies, and human Souls, rational
 Creatures, and Worlds; any Thing can
 arise out of any Thing, or, indeed, out of
 Nothing: And it is no matter How, or
 What we talk, for all Difference between
 Sense and Nonsense ceases.

The *Idea of Nature*, which is the Atheist's
 second Refuge, is as vain and idle. For,
 if Nature be a Thing void of Under-
 standing,

standing, How can it produce the most regular, the most wise Effects? How, from it, can result living, and rational Creatures, from a Principle void of Life, void of Reason? It is as unequal to such a Work as *Chance*, and but another *blind*, and obscure Term, introduced to make the World, and all Things in it, of which the Asserter has no precise Meaning, or Understanding. For let him say, that his Nature has Understanding, or not. If no Understanding, he hath dictated a notable Principle of the Original of Mankind: If it has Understanding, his Nature is but another Word for God.

Modern Atheists are ashamed of both these, and therefore a *third* Way better pleases them. And that is, Seeing it is so difficult to account for the Beginning and Original of Mankind without a God, they boldly affirm it had no Beginning, no Original at all. Or, in other Words, they would fain fancy that one Man hath proceeded from another everlastingly, and that there was never any first Man, never any Man that came into the World in an extraordinary Way, but one Man from another, as we see they do now, and that from Eternity. But the Absurdity and Contradiction of this is no less evident: For,

I. There

Sermon

II. of Mankind assigned. One Man proceeded from another. It is true. And so does one Brute from another. But, How is this? Did my Father, for Example, design, arrange the several Parts of my Body? Did he contrive the Organs of my Senses, of my Sight, and Hearing, &c? nothing less. Instead of it, perhaps he knew little of this, very little of my Composition and Frame. How could he then be the Cause of it? An instrumental Cause he might be, that is, such a Cause, as a Tool is in the Hand of an Artist; he might be used and guided to wise Purposes, of which he knew nothing himself; but a proper, a principal, and adequate Cause he could never be, because he designed not, framed not, yea, knew not his own Work; which shews, that he had a Supervisor, a Director, which designed, laid out the Parts of Man's Body, and in the Virtue of which it was made and framed.

2. The Asserters of an endless, and infinite Succession of Men, like not the other Hypothesis, that noble Philosophy, of Men's springing at first up out of the Ground, without any wise or super-intending Cause; and, indeed, Who can blame them? For this is strange Philosophy indeed; therefore

fore they had rather have it to be from all Sermon
Eternity, as it is now; that is, Men should **II.**
be perpetually propagated, in a natural
Way, by Male and Female: Good! but,
How do they introduce this? Is not this
Business of Male and Female in the animal
World evidently a Contrivance, a Design?
Is it not directed to some End? and, Where
is the Author, the Contriver of this? It
has none, says the Atheist; and, Can there
be more incorrigible Nonsense than this?
Things suited with the greatest Delicacy
and Exactness to an End, without any De-
sign or End, without any Contriver and
Framer! What Stuff is this!

3. This endless Succession of Men is most
absurd and impossible. And this hath been
shewn many Ways, which the Time ad-
mits not to be particularly insisted on.
One Absurdity, or rather Contradiction, I
think, it is evidently attended with; and
that is, it implies an infinite Number of
Effects without any Cause. There is not a
clearer Principle of Reason than whatsoe-
ver begins to exist, must have had a Cause,
and without this, no one Effect could ever
be in the World. But now seeing one
single Effect could never be understood,
could never be allowed, without a Cause;
Can an infinite Number of Effects be con-
ceived,

Sermon ceived, and admitted without a Cause?

II. When it implys a downright Impossibility, a flat Repugnancy to our Reason, that any one Thing should start into Being without the Help and Operation of another. Is it more easy to our Understanding, That not only one Thing, but Millions, yea, infinite Numbers of Things should be able to do this? Better a great deal to say, That the First, or one single Man had no Cause, than That an infinite Number of Men have had none.

In this infinite Number and Succession of Men there never was any one Man, but what had a Cause of his Being and Existence; this must be owned: For, for the same Reason that I must have had a Cause, who lately began to Be, must every individual Man have had one that has been before me; in this endless Succession, not a Man but hath required, and actually had a Cause, who hath ever been, and lived upon the Face of the Earth. And this shews, as I said, That there is an infinite Number of Effects asserted in this Scheme, without any Cause at all of them, than which there is not a more nonsensical Chimera.

But not only is this absurd, but impossible, and a Contradiction, as a few Words will serve to shew; for what more evident, than That whatsoever is past, was once pre-

present, and consequently, in this supposed infinite Succession, there never was a Man, that is now dead, but once hath lived, once was present; and if this be true of every Man (as it must be true of all Men, none excepted;) if all have lived, have had a Beginning, I say, if they have had a Beginning all, without exception, What talk we, That never was there a first Man, That never was there a Beginning of Mankind? Is not this a Contradiction? in *adjuncto* at least, as the Schools term it.

And indeed this holds good against the Eternity of all Things that have Succession, whose Duration is made up of Hours, Months, and Years: For this is the proper Definition of Time, to which Eternity is opposed, and whatsoever thus exists, for certain hath not been Eternal; of whatsoever it can be truly said, that it is more or less, that it increases in Age, is older or younger, or the like, that can never be eternal; for these are all Properties of Things finite, have a Reference to, and evidently imply a Beginning: for, Why is a Thing said to be older? Why is a Thing said to be increased? but from a plain Reference to its Beginning: To Day it hath lived longer than Yesterday — there is an Addition made to it of Minutes and Hours, &c. This is all right, if it had a Beginning, true and good

Sermon good Sense; but if it had no Beginning, if
 II. Eternal, nothing is more absurd; for all
 these Distinctions are lost, have no Place in
 Eternity, there can be no first, no Encrease,
 no Addition made to that which hath been
 from Eternity, it can never be said more
 or less, older or younger; which argues
 Time and Eternity of a quite different Na-
 ture, and that all Things that have Suc-
 cession, or exist by Parts, belong to the
 former, are Creatures, or had a Begin-
 ning.

And this shews the gross Absurdity of
 Atheism, and that whether Speculative or
 Practical: I shall speak a few Words to
 both.

I. Of speculative Atheism. This is so
 monstrous a Thing, that it hath been que-
 stioned by some, whether any are truly ca-
 pable of it; and whether such as have pro-
 fessed it, have not counterfeited this abo-
 minable Part, and bely'd their own inward
 Sentiments and Thoughts. And, indeed,
 there hath been some Cause of this Suspi-
 cion, not only from the universal Acknow-
 ledgment that this Truth hath met with,
 and the Difficulty there is to free the Mind
 from it, but from the mighty Fears and
 Frights that sudden Dangers have cast profes-
 sed Atheists into, which have looked like tacit

Con-

Confessions of a superior Power. They have been afraid of sudden Evils; they have been afraid of the divine Vengeance, which in Words they have deny'd; they have started at it, and shewn strange Turns and Confusions of Mind, which others have interpreted as a Recovery of Nature and Reason to its self, from that barbarous and horrid Enormity called *Atheism*, which hath strangely turned the Brain, and confounded the Soul.

Vaninus, the most obstinate Atheist, perhaps, that ever lived, upon Application of the Fire to him, cry'd out, O God! which By-standers minded him of, as a Confession of the Truth he denied, and for the Denial whereof he suffered: He excused it, indeed, as a sudden Start, as no premeditated Act; but others thought there was more Proof for the Being of a God in that sudden Start, than in all his Meditations or Dialogues *against* it. Was not *Spinoza*, the famous mathematical Atheist, of the same Opinion? he admitted none of his former Friends and Acquaintance to visit him in his last Sickness, but was contented with the Company and Service of an old Woman, fearing that Nature might recoil and prevail over his Principles, and incline him to recant on his Death-bed; or, as he said, (which amounts to the same) that in his

Sermon
II.

Weakness he might utter something to the Disparagement of his Philosophy. O blessed God ! What Constraint is here upon the Faculties of Mens Minds ? What Pains to stifle Conscience and Reason, to run Madmen, and everlastingly undo themselves ?

But not to dispute whether Men can be real Atheists or not: (Although I believe it no easy Attainment, and to have been very rare, that Men of common Sense have been real Atheists a long Time together : For ought I know, in Fits they may be, when transported by their Company or Cups ; at such a Time as this it may be likely enough, so foolish a Thought may have entered their Hearts, as that there is no God ; but a deliberate and settled Persuasion in sober Hours, without Intermissions of Doubts and Fears about it, this, I fancy, hath seldom been, if ever.) But to let this pass — The Question is, When Men have arrived to this Singularity, and Height of Knowledge, as they think it, the Knowledge of a Negative, (which, by the Bye, is, in most Cases, impossible) ; I say, the Point is, Whether this be the Effect of a total Extinction of their Reason, or an Improvement of it. If the Latter, let us see upon what their Atheism is grounded, upon what invincible Demonstration, upon what Probability,

bability, yea, upon what Shadow of a Reason. And here I call not upon them, to account for Things without them; such as the Wisdom appearing in the Frame of living and inanimate Things: I speak not of the Universe, of the Constancy and Order, Regularity and Usefulness of all its Motions. I shall not trouble them about this, but, agreeably to my present Argument, request them to turn their Eyes inwardly upon themselves, and survey their own Nature. And let them account, with any Shew of Reason, for either Body, or Soul without God, for any one Faculty of either, for their Organs of Sight and Hearing, yea, let them account for any one Part or Limb about them, for any Finger they have, without a God, and I have done; I shall not call Atheism so very monstrous and nonsensical a Thing.

Let them survey their Fore-fathers, their Founders, and consider what notable Stuff they have vouched. To omit *Epicurus*, and divers others, whose Principles I have already mentioned, What said their late great Oracle *Spinoza*? Amongst other extraordinary Things that he uttered, That there were no final Causes, no Design in any one Thing the Universe presents us with. That, for Example, the Position and Motion of the Sun implied no Contrivance, had no

Sermon

II.

~ Aim in it; although it serves to so many great and extraordinary Purposes; so that if the greatest finite Wisdom that ever was, had been to contrive its Situation and Course, it could never have been so happily disposed of, to the Accomplishing so innumerable excellent Ends. To come nearer to our selves — He goes on, That there is no Design in our Body, neither in the Whole, nor in any one Part of it. And consequently that our Eyes were not given us to see, our Ears to hear, our Noses to smell, nor our Mouths and Teeth to eat. Is not this noble and rare Philosophy? And is not Atheism a fine Thing, which standeth upon such Assertions as these? and, Is not the Man finely directed, who ventureth both Soul and Body, his temporal and eternal Interest upon such Stuff as this?

A Gentleman now living, his Name is — but I must forbear That, for he sets it not to the Books he publishes for the Use and Benefit of Mankind; I say, a Man of some Name in the World, who, *Fame* says, was the Author of the *Anatomy of the State*, a late Book well known, bearing many Editions; had this celebrated Author looked into, and anatomized himself instead of the State, accounted for his own Nature and Being to the Publick, I believe, we should not have had so many Attempts from the
same

same Hand to exclude a God, the Divinity of our Redeemer, the Authority of the *New Testament*, and bring these Things all to nothing. And it is really Pity that common Men were not well informed of the Principles and Essays of these noble Authors, towards delivering them from all Fear of a God and another World, that they might the better judge of the Usefulness and Truth of their other rare Productions, their *Invectives*, and *State-Anatomies*. II.

But 2dly, Not less monstrous and foolish is *practical* Atheism than *Speculative*. This is a Denial of God in our Works, while in Words and outward Profession we own his Existence and divine Perfections. And would to God this was so rare a Thing, as seldom to be found amongst Men as the Former! But the Frequency of it, or of a wicked and ungodly Life, under the Profession of a Belief of a God, doth not render it less absurd and mischievous. It is hard, indeed, to determine which is the greatest Folly and Extravagance, whether practical or speculative Atheism; as, who can tell which is the greater Madman, the more wilful Fool; either he that shuts his Eyes upon leaping a Precipice, or, he that is resolved to take the Fall with

Sermon his Eyes open, with all the Danger and

II. Terror in his Sight; the Latter, I must confess, is the most audacious — So, indeed, I take speculative Atheism to be, a grand Force and Violence put upon the Reason, a voluntary Extinction of its Light: But practical Atheism professes quite another Thing, a free Admission both of the Light of Reason and the Gospel, and yet out-faces and out-dares it all, stifles all the Conviction it affords, and is a practical Contradiction.

The Ox, saith the Prophet, knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib; but Israel knoweth not, my People doth not consider. These Creatures, the Ox and the Ass, as stupid as they be, yet learn to distinguish the Hand that feeds them. Man, who hath the Advantage of Reason and Reflection, and in the Vertue of this discovereth his Author, Preserver, and Benefactor, is no ways struck with his Benefits and Blessings, maketh no Return of Duty or Acknowledgment for them, in which surely he appeareth more stupid, incogitant, and ungrateful than the Beasts.

Do we believe a God? so say the practical Atheists. But consider they withal, the infinite Greatness of his Majesty and Perfections? I doubt they do not, for if they did, they could never treat him nor his

his Laws with Indifferency and Contempt. Sermon II.
 He would be the greatest Object of their Fear and Love, of their Dependence and Admiration. *When I think of him, saith David, I am afraid of him; and again, My Flesh trembleth for fear of him.* And well it might, when he considered the infinite and astonishing Power with which he is invested, the Greatness and Incomprehensibleness of his Nature and Majesty! What should over-awe us like this? Surely the Prophet upbraideth Men well in this Particular: *Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a Man that shall die? or the Son of Man that shall be made like Grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth? and hath feared continually every Day, because of the Fury of the Oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy, and where is the Fury of the Oppressor?* To fear the Power of Man, and be under great Dread, what, every Day he can do to us, and to be under no Pain at all as to the Power of God, and what Evils he can bring upon us, What egregious Inconsideration and Folly?

In good Earnest, I say again, Do we believe that we were made by God? That we have no one Thing, no one Endowment, no one Faculty of Body and Mind, but we

Sermon received it from him? And is there no Re-

II.  turn due for this? Is the Man accounted a Monster, that is sensible of no Favours from Men? Whom no Benefits will bind or allure? It becomes Men, especially of good Manners, and ingenuous Education, to reflect on this: Should they deal by their Fellow-Creatures, as they adventure to do by God, should they despise, affront their earthly Benefactors or Friends, as they do their Maker, what strange Things would they soon be reputed? What Monsters would they appear to others, and themselves? and, Can they fancy that they can be in any Esteem or Favour with God, under such a Behaviour? and, That they appear not as bad to him, as they do to others and themselves? or, That God hath a better Opinion of the highest Ingratitude than Man hath? or, That it is safer to affront him, than poor mortal Creatures of their own Kind? To see what is termed a Man of Honour, blown up with great Resentment and Rage, upon a bare Imagination of any Slight, any little Affront that an Inferiour or an Equal hath passed upon him, and yet the same Man a Blasphemer of the Divine Majesty, every Day contemning his Authority, from whom he derived all he is, or has, under whose Protection he lives and breaths, and by whose

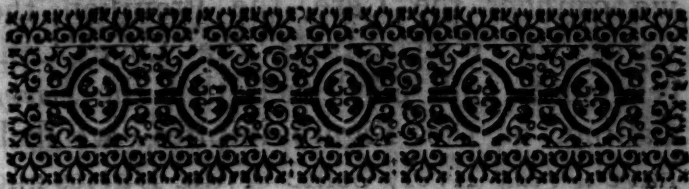
whose Power he does every Thing, an Af- Sermon
fronter of the God that made him, and be II.
insensible of all this, of his own base Car-
riage; I say, What a Sight is this? What a
monstrous Figure to behold?

But if Men have no Sense of *Gratitude*
or *Ingenuity*, one would think they should
of *Interest*. The same Being who made
them, and endowed them with Body and
Mind, What cannot he do for them? How
happy or miserable can he make them?
The *Clay* is not so much in the Power of
the *Potter*, as we are in the Hands of our
Maker, and we can be no otherwise than
what he renders us. And is it no odds to
us, whether we oblige or disoblige him?
Make him our Friend or our Enemy?
Whatsoever Men vainly think here, and
howsoever they may presume upon, and
make bold with their Maker, and chuse
rather to offend him, than any Man or
any Thing, to postpone him to every
Thing, slight him for every Thing; they
have infinite Reason to fear, at last, that
the Deity may not prove so tame, so in-
dulgent, so insensible a Thing, like *Epi-*
curus's Gods, or *Æsop's* King, suffering eve-
ry Thing to trample upon him. The Scrip-
ture Accounts are infinitely more rational,
more agreeable to our Notions of God, That
it is a fearful Thing to fall into his Hands,
and

Sermon and that it is our highest Wisdom and Interest to value, and regard, and fear him, who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell. That we may be acted with this Persuasion; love, fear, and obey God, from whom we have received all Things, may He, of his infinite Mercy, grant, through the Merits of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.



SERMON



SERMON III.

Of the CATHOLICK
CHURCH.



JOHN X. 16.

*And there shall be one Fold, and one
Shepherd.*

PERHAPS there is hardly Sermon
III.
any *Metaphor* that the Spirit
of God hath more constantly
used than this in the Text,
nor any more instructive; in
which we see the Office and Duty of a true
Teacher, or Minister of the Word, set forth
under the Emblem of a *Shepherd*, and great
Ana-

Sermon *Analogy* there is between them : And when
 III. we consider the Care, the Provision, the
 Pains, the Watchfulness, the Love, Con-
 cernment, and Tenderneſs that the *Lower*
Calling, or the Figure implies, we ſhall
 have a very lively Senſe of the Duties and
 Obligations of the *Higher*, and more ſpi-
 ritual One, which is represented under it.
 Agreeably to this, our Saviour here is ſti-
 led the *Good Shepherd*, and elſewhere the
Chief Shepherd, and the *Church*, which Chri-
 ſtians compoſe, the *Fold*, which contains,
 and ſeparates them from the Reſt of the
 World.

Under this Allegory, I ſhall diſcourſe 'of
 the *Catholick Church*, as it is made up of
 Believers of all Nations and Languages,
 compoſing together but one great *Fold*, un-
 der one great *Shepherd*, and *Bishop* of our
 Souls : *And other Sheep I have, which are*
not of this Fold, Them alſo muſt I bring,
and they ſhall hear my Voice, AND THERE
SHALL BE ONE FOLD.

Upon which Words, to do what Right I
 can to my Subject, and in as ſhort a Com-
 paſs of Time as poſſible, I ſhall,

First, Shew what the **CATHOLICK
 CHURCH** is.

Secondly,

Secondly, Shew you, that there is such Sermon
a Thing as ONE CATHOLICK CHURCH. III.

Thirdly, Endeavour to assign, in what
the UNITY of the CATHOLICK
CHURCH consisteth, or what makes
it ONE, or CATHOLICK.

In the Last Place, I shall draw, I hope,
some clear, and instructive Inferences
from the Whole. And,

I. What the Catholick Church is. Now
this is but another Word for *Universal*, in
which it is distinguished from true *Parti-*
cular Churches, as a Whole is from its Parts.
And this is no needless, scholastick Distin-
ction, but hath Foundation in the Nature
of the Thing, and became necessary and
unavoidable, upon the Progress of Chri-
tianity: For, in its first Beginning and
Rise it consisted but of a small Number of
Men, not remote in Place, or Time; but
this Religion being, not, like the *Jewish*,
design'd for one Place and Country only,
but, to prevail over all, to subject all to its
Influence, and Government, and Laws, it
soon became needful to appear in different
Collections, and Places, and under different
Govern-

Sermon Governours: All which were not properly
 III. a Multiplication of different Churches,
 but an Enlargement and Propagation of the
 same Church; as in Case where a King
 makes Conquests, and extends his Authority
 over many Countries, and governs them all
 by the same Laws, there is still but one
 Empire, one Government, although much
 enlarged, and comprehending many Provinces
 and Countries under it; and so we say
 universal Empire, as well as universal Church.
 In like manner, every particular and true
 Church, yea, every good Christian, is Part
 of the universal or Catholick Church; how-
 soever remote in Place, they make but one
 Church. Of this St. Cyprian hath left us a
 clear and beautiful Image; "The Church of
 God is but One, howsoever increasing and
 branching into Many; as the Sun hath many
 Rays, yet is but one Light; and as a Tree
 hath many Branches, yet but one Strength,
 or Life, founded in the Root; or as when
 many Streams proceed from one Fountain,
 at a Distance there appeareth a Number
 of flowing Rivers, but yet, it is but One
 in the Original: Take off a Ray of Light
 from the Body of the Sun, the Light being
 but One, will admit of no Division: Break
 a Branch from the Tree, it can never grow:
 Cut a Stream off

“ off from the Fountain, it drieth up : So Sermon
 “ the Church of God, overspread with Light, III.
 “ extends its Rays throughout the whole
 “ World, yet it is but one Light, which
 “ is every where diffused ; there is no Se-
 “ paration of it. The great Fruitfulness
 “ of the Tree, as in the other Image,
 “ spreads its Branches throughout the whole
 “ Earth, and so, *lastly*, the Fountain large-
 “ ly pours out its Streams and Rivers, yet
 “ there is but one Head, one Original, one
 “ Mother, abounding in Success and In-
 “ crease.” So the Father. This will help
 to open to us the Necessity of

The *Second Particular*, viz. That there is
 such a Thing as *one Catholick, or universal*
Church. It were, indeed, strange, if there
 should not, when it is made an Article of
 our Faith, and the Belief of it necessary
 to Salvation : But of the greater Import-
 tance it is, of the more Necessity is it to
 be considered and understood : And two
 Things will evince this, viz. *Scripture*, and
 the *Nature of the Thing* it self.

And *1st, Scripture* : The Terms by which
 the Word of God represents the Christian
 Church imply Unity. To omit what the
 Fathers so frequently urge on this Head,
 out of the Book of *Canticles*, as in those
 Emblems

Sermon Emblems of a Dove, of a Fountain sealed,
 III. of a Garden inclosed, and the like, which
 they constantly * expound of the Church
 of God; there are others of a less dubious
 Signification, as when the Church is term-
 ed the *Body* of our blessed Saviour: Our Sa-
 viour can have but one Body, a Multi-
 plication of this were monstrous, and there-
 fore hereby is Unity, and Universality
 implied; and so, no less, in that other fa-
 mous Appellation, and Title, wherein the
 Church sustains the Name of *Spouse*: This
 must denote Unity, for it were no less de-
 rogatory, and incongruous, to make a Sup-
 position of two *Spouses*, than of two *Bodies*.
 In plain and expresse Terms, how often is
 the Unity of the Church asserted? as, *Feed
 the Church of God, which he hath purchased
 with his own Blood*: And here, in the Text,
 a Coalition both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* make
 but one Fold, but one Church.

It is true, indeed, There is often men-
 tion made of *Churches*, in Scripture, as well
 as *Church*: But this is only, what is com-
 monly termed, an *external Denomination*,
 not arising from any Multiplication of the
 Thing it self, but from the Position, or Re-
 spect it bears to the Places where it is:
 These are many, and, for the Sake of a Di-

* St. Cyprian. de Unitat. Eccles. p. 297.

stinction of the several Parts or Branches of this universal Church, are fitly denominated after the Places where they are planted. As, the Churches of *Asia*, and the like : Different Churches they are not, but the same Church in different Places, according to the foregoing Images of *St. Cyprian* ; the same Sun, the same River, in different Countries ; the same Tree, with divers Branches, &c. And so much for the scriptural Proof, which was to shew, That Catholick, or universal Church, is no meer abstracted Notion, or Figment of the Brain, but hath Foundation and Authority in the Word of God.

III.

And so, no less, 2dly, in the *Nature of the Thing* it self, or in human Reason. For, if Churches be conceived as different, they must have some real Ground of Difference, or Unlikeness ; and if this lieth in some fundamental, essential Matters, or Points, one of them can never be a true Church : As, where there is an essential Dissimilitude between two Creatures, they can never be both of the same Kind. One Man may differ from another in Form, Colour, Feature, or other accidental Matters, and so perhaps may one Church from another, of which more hereafter ; but if we carry the Difference so far between two Men,

Sermon that they agree not in the essential Parts,
 III. or Ingredients of the Kind, one of them
 must needs be somewhat besides a Man: It
 is as true of Churches, If one Church be a
 true Church, another essentially, funda-
 mentally unlike it can be no Church at
 all.

Men who differ in nothing, or, at least,
 in nothing which makes a Church, must
 needs esteem themselves of the same Church
 or Communion; and their Assembling toge-
 ther at different Places or Countries, no
 more makes them of different Churches or
 Religions, than, at a great and general En-
 tertainment, Mens eating, for Convenience
 sake, at several Tables, makes the Enter-
 tainment different, or themselves the Guests
 of different Feast-makers: For Walls, and
 Places, and Distances, make nothing in re-
 gard to God, whose Essence pervades every
Where, and every *Place*, and qualifies him,
 with infinitely greater Ease and Exactness,
 to survey the various Collections of Chri-
 stians distributed throughout the whole
 World, than a Man is able to discern the
 Company he entertains in one Room, or at
 one Table.

There is certainly as much Reason to
 esteem Men of different Churches, from
 their Sitting in different Places or Seats, at
 the same Church, as from their being se-
 parated

separated at the remotest Points of the Globe: For a Church hath a peculiar Regard to God, and *from one Pole to the Other* makes nothing to him; whereas, a Yard's Distance is a great deal to Man: Therefore, the whole universal Church is but one Household, one Family; as the Word of God declares it.

Sermon
III.

But seeing the *Unity* of the Church consisteth not in *Place*, in what doth it consist?

This is the *third* Thing; to endeavour to assign, in what the Unity of the Catholick Church consisteth; or, what maketh it *One*, or *Catholick*. Now, in general, it is to be observed, That whatsoever is absolutely necessary to make a single Man a Christian, is equally necessary to make a Christian Church: For, a Church is but a Number or Collection of Christians, or of Men holding and professing the Christian Faith; and any Number of unchristian Men can never compose a Christian Church, for the same Reason, that an unbelieving Man can never make a true Member of any particular christian Church; and so particular Churches, not holding and professing the true Christian Faith, can be no Parts or Branches of the Church Catholick, or Universal. So, again farther, If there be

Sermon

III.

any Disposition of Mind, any Institutions, or Forms of Government, absolutely necessary to the Being of a Church, every particular Church must partake of them, or else it can never become a Part of the universal Church, or belong to it. This being premised, and, I think, carrying its own Evidence with it, it will be as clear,

I. That the *Unity* of the Catholick Church consisteth in an Unity of *Doctrine*, or *Belief*, at least, as to all Things necessary to Salvation. Howsoever, particular Churches or Men in them, may differ in other Points, yet they must all agree in *these*, they must all believe and profess *these*, or else they can never compose one universal Church. No Man, or Church is at Liberty to innovate *here*, to add, or diminish, without taking upon him a greater Authority than ever the Apostles, yea, than our Lord himself assumed: For he spake not of himself, but what he heard, and was commanded of his Father. And his Apostles were under the same Confinement and Obligation, to hearken to no Reasoning, to no Wit, no Invention of their own, but keep to pure and express Revelation in those necessary, fundamental Points. So that the pure Christian Doctrine, the Belief of which is necessary to make any Man, or Number of Men,

Of the Catholick Church.

69

Sermon
III.

Men, Christian, is thus derived, according to the Account of the Gospel: Our Lord received it from his Father, the Apostles from him, and his Spirit, and the Church of God in all Ages from the Apostles, and their Writings; in which, Who sees not Unchangeableness, Unalteration? And hence it is, that the Word of God teaches us, That the Church is *built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner-stone*; and fixes an *Anathema* upon any Man, yea, even upon an Angel from Heaven, that should preach any other Gospel than what the Apostles preached: The Gospel, What is That? Had the Apostles no determinate Meaning in this? Undoubtedly! and every Man may see what they meant, who will read the *New Testament* fairly, and impartially: But this is not our Business here. How sure must these Men be, as to the Certainty and Unalterableness of their Doctrine, when they thus express themselves? How certain of their own Authority, and Infallibility in those Points? And hence *Timothy* has it so frequently, and solemnly in Charge, from his spiritual Father, *Hold fast the Form of sound Words, which thou hast heard of me*: And again, *The Things that thou hast heard of me, among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to*

Sermon

III.

teach others also : keep that which is committed to thy Trust: All which, and much more, which I might alledge, assert one constant, unalterable Rule of Faith and Doctrine ; and, that without it, there can be no such Thing as a Christian Church.]

Agreeably to this, it was one irrefragable Argument of the Fathers, of the Truth of their Religion, in their Disputes with the Hereticks, that the Faith that they held was the Faith of all true Christian Churches ; and how far soever remote they were in Place and Country, how much soever they differ'd in Customs and Manners, whether Jewish or Heathen Converts, whether Barbarous or Polite, whether Learned or Ignorant, all were at profound Agreement and Peace as to those necessary, essential Points. And that this was no vain Boast, appears from the great Uniformity of the Creeds of several Churches which remain to this Day ; and indeed, this was one especial Reason of the Church's being term'd *Catholick*, or Universal, because of one Doctrine, or one Faith that was taught, held, and profess'd every where by it, in Opposition to heretical Assemblies, who as much differ'd from one another, as from the Catholick Church it self : And, for the same Reason is it termed *Apostolical*, because its Doctrines and Articles of Faith

are

are the same as the Apostles preached, and converted Men to the Belief of: And truly, should we once depart from this, we may not only turn *Papists*, but *Mahometans*, *Heathen Apostates*, and yet fancy our selves of the Christian Church: For in what do these several collective Bodies of Men more differ from one another, than in Matters of Belief? This is therefore the first Thing: The Unity of the Catholick Church consists in an Unity of Faith, and Doctrine. There is but one Faith: and this Faith makes it *one*, or the *same* Church.

III.

2. It not only agrees in *Faith*, but *Charity*, and Love: For the two great Bonds of any Society, are, Agreement of *Principle* and *Affection*, and the One naturally produces the Other. This we see in all worldly and human Societies; being of the same Mind and Opinion even as to mean, low, and uncertain Things, is strangely conciliating, and endearing, and makes Men look upon one another with a more kind and favourable Eye: But no Agreement acteth so certainly and powerfully as that founded upon true Christian Principles; and where the Christian Faith is, there will be Christian Love: For it is its necessary Operation or Effect, and the Man or Church that wants Love, doth as much want Faith.

Sermon Now, as Love is the necessary unavoidable

III. Result of a true Faith, so, in general, it is of the Nature of Love, we know, to unite. There are, doubtless, several other Engagements, and Bonds of Society; there is Fear, and Interest, and many other Passions, and Motives, which contribute towards Union; but the Surest, the Closest, the most Powerful is That of Love: For this not only unites Mens Bodies together, but reaches farther, or rather deeper, affects Mens Souls, mixes, as it were, and blends them together, and makes them *one*: And so it is not only the Strongest, and most Delightful, but the most intimate Union. And this is the Image that the Scripture gives us of a Church. The Believers, in ancient Days, were of *one Heart, and one Soul, and had all Things common*: And St. Paul commonly styles the Church, in general, the *Body* of our Lord, and teaches particular Christians to esteem, and treat one another as *Members* of the same Body; that is, with the same Tenderneſs and Compassion as they would treat themselves: For although they were *many*, yet were they but *one Thing* in the Lord, but *one Body*, and *one Bread*, as he expresses it. And doth not all this imply Love? Surely the most Divine, and Ardent!

Of the same Moment and Necessity is Love to the Church Catholick, or Universal, as it is to particular Churches: The whole Fabrick is held together, and made one by this spiritual Ligament, and this, not pervading, and influencing, and acting strongly upon its Parts, makes it no longer one, it breaks and separates it into innumerable Parts and Divisions: And of this was the ancient Church sensible, and shewed their Agreement or Unity, not only by their Faith, but Charity; as appears abundantly by their esteeming themselves all of one *Fraternity*, by their constant Correspondence, Counsel, and Advice, by admitting one another to Communion, by the spiritual and temporal Assistance which they afforded one another, upon all Occasions, of which, and the like Instances of Charity and Communion, I have not Time to speak particularly.

3. The Union of the Catholick Church consisteth in an Agreement of *Order* and *Government*, so far forth as the Word of God hath prescribed and commanded: And it is very clear, that the Word of God hath ordained some Rules as to *this*, to which all Churches ought to conform. I shall select some few Instances of this Kind, which, to me, appear Matter of clear and express Revelation.

Sermon velation. What can any Man think of the
 III. *Sacraments*? Surely these are necessary to
 form a Christian Assembly or Church. As
 for *Baptism*, this initiates Men into the
 Church, and if Men will not submit to the
 Institution of our Blessed Lord for that
 End, it is very difficult, methinks, to con-
 ceive how they should be accounted Mem-
 bers of it. As in the Jewish Church, *Cir-*
cumcision being the Rite of Admission, such
 as would not undergo it, were never esteem-
 ed perfect Members, nor entitled to the
 Priviledges of it: And, which is more, to
 Baptism is evidently annexed Forgiveness
 of Sins, the new Birth, the Spirit of God,
 without which, no Man can be truly a
 Member of Christ's Body, and consequent-
 ly no Collection of such Men can ever be-
 come Part of the Catholick Church. *Bap-*
tism, I say, is the ordinary Way of making
 us Members of the Church, and of convey-
 ing to us the divine Spirit; and if Men
 pretend to it, without *this*, it must be in
 Ways extraordinary, unpromised, and un-
 revealed, upon which, What Man or Church
 durst presume? So again, as to the *Sacra-*
ment of the *Lord's Supper*, it is not only
 instituted, and commanded by our Lord,
 but to such peculiar and extraordinary Pur-
 poses and Ends, that one cannot reconcile
 the Want, or Denial of it, to the very Be-
 ing

ing of a true Church. For it will be granted, I suppose, by all good Christians, That without being considered as in the Son of God, without being invested with his Righteousness, without the Sacrifice of his Death, without being influenced by his Spirit, Men may have the Name, indeed, but can never have the Essence of a true Church. Now of all *this* is the Sacrament an Application, for we partake of his Body and Blood in it; How? Literally. No, that were impossible; but Spiritually. The Effects of his Life, Passion, Death, are imputed to us, made ours, upon our worthy Receiving it. What were all the Prayers of the Catholick Church, without Relation to the Son of God, and the Sacrifice of his Death? We are taught abundantly they would signify nothing, be of no Effect with God: Strip the Christian Devotion as well as their Persons of this, and both would be unaccepted: And is not the Sacrament the Representation of this Death? What? Is not the Church founded upon our Saviour's Blood? and of this Blood, Is not the Sacrament a Type or Commemoration? and, Can one easily believe, that any Society who have not the Type, the Figure, the Means, should have the Effect, or Thing signified, imputed, and conveyed to them? I am sure, in this Case, one must have recourse

Sermon
III.

Sermon course to extraordinary Ways and Mercies,
 III. with which *here* we have nothing to do.

No less ought the *Government* of a Church to be agreeable to the Model that God hath prescribed; for no Society of Men can subsist without some Order and Form; there must be Subordination, Superiority, and Subjection between Men in all Communities, or else it will be a miserably confused, deformed Thing; and particularly in Christian Assemblies, there being Duties and Ordinances of a peculiar Nature, such as the Administration of the Word and Sacraments in which only One can officiate at a Time, and consequently, in which it seems needful, that some One should have a peculiar Right to such Offices: For if all had an equal Right to preach, to baptize, and administer the Sacraments, What Confusion would ensue? It is therefore, That the Word of God hath not only established Decency and Order in general, but a Form of Church-Government, hath given some a Power of ordaining others to the Sacred Offices, without which regular Admission there could be no such Thing as proper Pastors; all might be Teachers, and no Hearers. Why not? when all had equal Right: And would not this overthrow all Order, all Distinction, and give us as ill-favoured an Idea of a Church, as the Destroying the peculiar

culiar Parts and Offices, and jumbling them all together, would give us of the Body-natural? *If the whole Body were an Eye,* Sermon III.

where were the Hearing? Were it not an odd Thing, in St. Paul's Opinion, if the whole Body ran out into one great EYE? Were it less inconsistent, and uncomely, if all the Members of a Church became Pastors, and Teachers; if this one Office, although an admirable good One, swallowed up all the Rest; and, What should hinder such a Confusion, if all are invested with a Right to it, as Christians, without any outward and regular Conveyance thereof? In short, destroy the Dependance, and Harmony of Parts, in a Body-natural, and ye make a Monster. And I leave all Men to consider, what a comely and beautiful Figure, such Positions and Practices, if they took Place, would make of a Church!

But some Men cannot discern any such Establishment in the Word of God. No; nor * Bishop, Priest, and Deacon: These Names they can read there, but not the Things. If this be really the Case with them, What can we here do, but, with a Christian Charity, pity their Undiscern-

* *Χωρίς τῶν ἐκκλησιᾶς ἐκαλεῖται*, Ignat. Epist. ad Trall. & iterum, *ὁ χωρὶς ἐπισκόπου καὶ πρεσβυτέρου καὶ διακόνου περὶ τινος ἐστὶ καθαρός ἐστὶν τῇ συνειδήσει.*

Sermon
III.

ment? for, What is plainer than this Distinction of Offices in the sacred Scriptures? There is less Dispute about two of them, viz. *Priest* and *Deacon*; and as to *Bishop*, in our Sense of the Word, one would think it should be very evident, in the Persons of *Timothy* and *Titus*; for they had clearly a Power of ordaining Presbyters, yea, of re-proving and censuring them. And were they not then of an Order above them? Call them what ye please, Bishops, or Evangelists, it mattereth not much, if the Thing be the same: And, Who can doubt That, who calmly considereth, That the Powers of these Men were superior to That of *Presbyters*; and, That it was delegated, or derived to them from the Apostles? Here is therefore an Order, an Authority, distinct from, superior to that of Presbyters, established in the Church by the Apostles, and That's the Thing: And after this, methinks, Men must be marvellously addicted to Disputation, to contend about the Name.

And if this be an Order, an Institution of the Holy Ghost, Who dares to alter it? I will say no more of this, but that the Primitive Church so esteemed it: The various Parts of the Church Catholick, howsoever remote from one another, had all the same Sacraments, the same Government, and

shew'd

shew'd themselves to be *one*, in these Re-Sermon
pects, as well as others. III.

The *last* Thing I shall mention on this Head, in which the universal Church must be at an Agreement, is in an *Unity*, and Conformity of *Worship* to the Word, and Will of God. I do not pretend to say, that it is needful to this Unity, that one Form of Prayer, or one Liturgy, in the same Words, should supply the universal Church: No: For, Who doubteth but the same Things may be express'd in different Words? But I speak of the Matter of the Prayers, the Object of them, and the Manner of our Addressing them; or, in other Words, *what* Things we say in our Prayers, *to whom* we say them, and *by whom*: These Things are all bounded by Scripture, are unchangeable, and all true Churches must conform to them, and be governed by one and the same Rule. For What? Must not every true Church have true Devotion, or a Devotion agreeable to the Mind and Will of God? What more the End and Design of a Church than the Glorification of the Name of God, than the Edification of Men? And, How could those Ends be obtained by a false, absurd, or an idolatrous Worship? or, How could the Members of one Church join in Prayer and Communicate with another, as Members of the Catholick Church, were the

Sermon the Devotion sinful, or impious? From
 III. these, and other Considerations, that are
 easy to be suggested, it appeareth, I think,
 very plain, that sound *Devotion* is as necessary to a true Church, as sound *Doctrine*; and howsoever the several Parts of the Catholick Church may differ from one another in Words, or Form, yet, in the Substance, and Essence of their Devotion they must agree, and be the same; so that every Where, or in every Church, the Devotion must appear Christian, have the same God for its Object, the same Mediator, and its constant and stated Liturgies, the same Things prayed for, and in Words agreeable to the Divine Nature and Will: For otherwise, I say, the Devotion would not be Christian, and without this, How could there be a Christian Church? And this is not only Theory, but Fact; the Primitive Church studied *Unity*, not only in the Substance of their Devotion, but in much less Things, as could be easily shewn. And so much shall suffice for the *Third* Thing, which aimeth briefly to comprehend the Institutions and Orders necessary to the Being, and Ends of a Christian Church.

The *Fourth* and *Last* Thing in which the Unity of the Catholick Church consisteth, is what we often read of in the *New Testament*,

flament, viz. *The Unity of the Spirit*. As our Lord is the *Head* of the Church, and as the Church is his *Body*, so his *Spirit* animates the Whole; and this makes All particular Churches *One*, in a most close and intimate Manner; as much *One*, as the Body is *One*, whose different Parts are all collected, and held together, and animated by one Soul. Upon the Soul's Departure from the Body, the Body is no longer *One*, but crumbles and divides into innumerable Parts: And so the great Bond of the Catholick Church, which makes it *One*, is this Spirit, and, upon a Separation from it, it falls asunder, hath no Union, nor Life in it, because it is divided from the true Fountain of Life, and Union. Our Saviour, to make us sensible of this, compares himself to the *Vine*, and his Church to the *Branches*. Such as his Spirit animates not, belong not really to the Church, as a Branch cut off from the Vine is no longer of it, but is dead and gone. The Influence of this Spirit makes, what our Divines call, the Invisible Church of Christ, truly his Body, or Spouse, or Church upon Earth; and the great, and the last Day, only, clearly displays this Point, viz. who is of this invisible Church: Only thus much we know here, That where this Spirit truly acts and governs, the Doctrines of Christianity are held stedfastly, and in-

Sermon
 III.


Sermon

III.

violably, I mean, in all necessary Points: Charity, Unity is studied and maintained, because these are all the pure and genuine Effects or Fruits of this Spirit, which it suggesteth, and testifieth to, and upholdeth in all the Faithful, until our *Lord*, the Head of the Church, appeareth, and is revealed from Heaven. I proceed now to the Inferences which may be drawn from the Whole.

And *First*, This opens to us the true Nature of *Heresy*, and *Schism*. As to the *First*, *Heresy*, This is a Division from the Catholick Church by Innovation of *Doctrine*; when Men will not submit to the Authority of the Word of God, but follow the Dictates of their own Fancy, and coin new Articles of Faith, instead of Receiving those that God hath revealed, and required the Belief of, in order to eternal Life: Then they are guilty, doubtless, of *Heresy*, and are no longer Parts of the Catholick, or the Universal Church. For ye have heard and know full well, that the Unity of the Catholick Church consisteth in an Agreement of Belief, as to all Things necessary and essential; for, *there is but one Faith* which Faith, all true Churches must hold in all Places, and Ages of the World: But *Heresy* abideth not by this Faith, which

was once delivered to the Saints, is not guided, nor held by it, but inventeth a new One, as much wiser, truer, and better; for so the Word *dispute* importeth: So that the Brain, the Fancy, or conceited Reason is such Mens Guide, instead of Scripture, and the Authority of our Lord. And this is the Notion that the Word of God affixes to *Heresy*. Saith St. Peter, *There shall be false Teachers amongst you, bringing in privately damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them.* This latter Clause explaineth in what the Nature of *Heresy* consisteth, and upon what Account it is damnable, namely, because of its Opposition to the Christian Revelation, in its highest, and most necessary Points: So that were the *Heretical* Doctrines supposed or received as true, the *Christian Faith* must be supposed false, and discarded: As it follows, *by reason of which, the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of.* Of the same Apprehension is St. Paul, for he ejected *Hymenæus* out of the Church, as a *Heretick*; For what? For a light Crime, as some account it now, only for disowning an Article of Faith: The Apostle's Charge against him is, that he asserted, *That the Resurrection was already past*: In which, ye will observe, the *Heretick* denied not absolutely the Resurrection, but, very probably, much after the

Sermon violably, I mean, in all necessary Points:

III.

Charity, Unity is studied and maintained, because these are all the pure and genuine Effects or Fruits of this Spirit, which it suggesteth, and testifieth to, and upholdeth in all the Faithful, until our *Lord*, the Head of the Church, appeareth, and is revealed from Heaven. I proceed now to the Inferences which may be drawn from the Whole.

And *First*, This opens to us the true Nature of *Heresy*, and *Schism*. As to the First, *Heresy*, This is a Division from the Catholick Church by Innovation of *Doctrine*; when Men will not submit to the Authority of the Word of God, but follow the Dictates of their own Fancy, and coin new Articles of Faith, instead of Receiving those that God hath revealed, and required the Belief of, in order to eternal Life: Then they are guilty, doubtless, of *Heresy*, and are no longer Parts of the Catholick, or the Universal Church. For ye have heard, and know full well, that the Unity of the Catholick Church consisteth in an Agreement of Belief, as to all Things necessary and essential; for, *there is but one Faith*; which Faith, all true Churches must hold, in all Places, and Ages of the World: But *Heresy* abideth not by this *Faith*, which

was once delivered to the Saints, is not guided, nor held by it, but inventeth a new One, as much wiser, truer, and better; for so the Word *ἀποστόλις* importeth: So that the Brain, the Fancy, or conceited Reason is such Mens Guide, instead of Scripture, and the Authority of our Lord. And this is the Notion that the Word of God affixes to *Heresy*. Saith St. Peter, *There shall be false Teachers amongst you, bringing in privately damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them.* This latter Clause explaineth in what the Nature of *Heresy* consisteth, and upon what Account it is damnable, namely, because of its Opposition to the Christian Revelation, in its highest, and most necessary Points: So that were the *Heretical* Doctrines supposed or received as true, the *Christian Faith* must be supposed false, and discarded: As it follows, by reason of which, the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of. Of the same Apprehension is St. Paul, for he ejected *Hymenæus* out of the Church, as a *Heretick*; For what? For a light Crime, as some account it now, only for disowning an Article of Faith: The Apostle's Charge against him is, that he asserted, *That the Resurrection was already past*: In which, ye will observe, the *Heretick* denied not absolutely the Resurrection, but, very probably, much after the

Sermon Fashion of some Men that I could name,
 III. spiritualized, and refined upon it: But yet,
 as specious and pious as this looked, the
 Apostle assures us it overthrew the Christian Faith, and render'd all such as embraced it no Christians; because of the necessary Dependence the Christian Faith has upon this Article, in its literal and genuine Sense. To the same Purpose that apostolical Man St. Ignatius * hath given us a very short, but clear Definition of *Heresy*. It is a Departure from the Christian Doctrine, or Doctrine of our Saviour, and his Apostles. But I must remember, I am not here to speak *fully* to the Nature of *Heresy*, but only by Way of *Inference*, which, I think, standeth plain: For if the Unity of the Catholick Church consisteth in an Agreement of Doctrine, at least as to all necessary fundamental Points; a Denial of these Doctrines, or Substituting others in their Room, is an Ejecting one's self out of the Church Catholick, and so becoming *Hetical*. And if this be so, What a Crime is it? What Arrogancy, Presumption, and

Epist. ad Ephes. ὅτι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐδεμία αἵρεσις ἀλλ' ἐδὲ
 ἀκρότε τινὲς πλεον ἢ περ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ λαλῶντος ἐν ἀληθείᾳ.
 & iterum Epist. ad Trall. μὴ τῇ χριστιανῇ τεσσὶ
 χρῆσθαι, ἀλλοθείας δὲ βολάνης ἀπέχεσθαι, ὅτις ἐστὶν
 αἵρεσις.

Pride

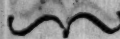
Pride doth it imply? It is assuming to one's Sermon
self, you see, the Authority of God, and III.
prescribing Terms of Salvation to the World,
than which, surely, nothing can be more
Luciferian and Abominable!

No less does this open to us the true Nature of *Schism*: For although all Hereticks are Schismatics, yet, on the contrary, are not all Schismatics, Heretical. For *Schism* only implies a *Rent*, or *Division*, and this is not always upon the Score of Doctrine. *Schism* therefore, as it stands distinguished from *Heresy*, owes its Birth, not to a Want of Truth, but *Vertue*: For it is usually, and truly defined, a causeless, unnecessary Separation from a Church, Opposing its true Pastors, Setting up others, and Rivalling and Vying with them: To which, when there is no just Occasion afforded from the Doctrine, from the Worship, or Discipline of a Church, What can it be imputed to but a Spirit of Contention, or a Want of Charity? For, as this Grace is the *Perfection* and *Bond* of all *Vertue*, so is it one great *Bond* of *Union* in the Catholick Church, and when it pervades not, nor animates the Hearts of its Members, it is not a bare Unity of Faith that can hold them together. A lovely Train of sociable Vertues wait always upon true Charity, or are comprehended in the Notion of it: Such as Humility, Meekness,

G 3

Sermon

III.



ness, Gentleness, Courtesy, Patience, Long-suffering, and the like; all which are noble Ingredients of Union? But, in Default of this Grace of Charity, Men are possess'd of the contrary Vices, Pride, Passion, Envy, Malice, Covetousness, &c. which, in their natural Operation, produce *Schism*, or Division: For never *was* there, or *can* there be a true Schismatick, but was Passionate, Envious, Proud, Malicious, Covetous, destitute of Charity, and of the Spirit of God. For, upon Supposition of the Soundness of a Church both in Faith and Worship, there is no *justifiable* Cause to produce a Separation from it, and the only Causes that remain, of so unnatural and pestilent an Effect, are the aforesaid Vices, and in very high Degrees too. So that Heresy and Schism, of which the World is apt to entertain too favourable an Apprehension, or rather, no Apprehension at all, when they are *True* and *Real*, of which I have been all along here discoursing, they are the greatest Complication of Wickedness, the greatest Instance of Carnality in the World. For, a * Father, who was very near the Apostle's

* Οἱ ὁμοθρόνοι βασιλείαν θεῶν ἐκκληρονομήσουσιν· ἐν οἷς καὶ σάρκα ταῦτα περὶ πάντας ἀπέθανον, πόσω μᾶλλον, ἐάν τις ἐν θεῷ, ἐν κακῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, θείῃ, ὡς ἡς Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς ἐσαυρώθη; ὁ τιμὴν τοῦ ρυπαροῦς γενομένου, εἰς πῦρ τοῦ ἀσβεστοῦ χωρήσει, ὁμοίως καὶ αἱ κείων αὐτοῦ. Ignat. ad Ephes. Epist.

Time,

Time, argues to this Effect: If we reckon *Sermon*
 an *Adulterer* (and with the highest Reason) *III.*
 who corrupts his Neighbour's Wife, a very
 wicked and profligate Man, how much more
 abominable is he, who presumes to corrupt
 the Doctrine of our Saviour, and conse-
 quently his *Sponse* the Church, for which
 he shed his Blood! Surely this would create
 in a Man a Horror!

Secondly, This will enable us to make a
 Judgment of other Churches, and as, I hope,
 we shall do it with Justice and Truth, so
 not without Candour and Charity: And,

I. Briefly of the *Roman Church*: This
 not only *assumes* the Title of Catholick, but
engrosses it wholly to her self; and, should
 we grant her to be a *Part*, it will not con-
 tent her, unless she be the *Whole*: So that
 all Churches which are not *Roman*, or of
 her Communion, she esteems *Heretical*.

But the greatest Pretensions are not al-
 ways best supported: And we must take
 Leave to examine, and not receive them, as
 she would have us, implicitly, and upon
 Trust. And here we most certainly know,
 if she be truly Catholick, she must hold and
 teach the Catholick, and Apostolical Do-
 ctrine: For, if not *St. Paul*, if not *St. Peter*,
 nay, if not an *Angel from Heaven* had Au-
 thority

Sermon thority to preach any other Gospel, than
 III. that which God delivered by the Apostles;
 nay, if such an Attempt were cursed in
 any of *them*; it surely were the Height of
 Infatuation to believe such a Power to be
 committed to any Bishop, any Council, any
 Church upon Earth: I mean, to make *That*
 Gospel, which was not *so* in the Apostles
 Days, which they taught not, and is not to
 be found in their Writings. So that, not-
 withstanding the Eminency of the *Roman*
 Church, she must be content to submit to
 the Apostles, or rather, to God, and Christ,
 in these Particulars, if she would be reve-
 red as Christian, Catholick, or Apostolical.
 For, surely, it is not *Sitting in St. Peter's*
Chair (had they the very numerical *Chair*,
 among their other Curiosities) that will
 make them the Catholick Church, if they
 have, the mean While, lost, or disowned
St. Peter's Faith and Doctrine; if they are
 not Successors to *this*, as well as his Place,
 and Throne. And, I must confess, when
 one considers the *Roman* Church under this
 View, as she hath introduced not a few of
 most unaccountable Doctrines, and made
 them of equal Necessity to Salvation, as any
 Doctrines of our Saviour; I say, when one
 considers this, as well as the Absurdity of
 her Worship, instead of believing her the
 only, the whole Catholick Church, one is
 in

in Pain and Doubt, whether she be any Part of it at all: For what is *Heresy*, but a Departure from the Apostles Doctrine, not making *this*, but our own Fancies and Conceits, or groundless, uncertain Tradition our *Rule*? And although the *Roman Church* hath not indeed *discarded* the *Creed*, or the *Articles of Faith*, which are indubitably of the Apostles; yet she *addeth* others to them, and, which is most abominable, bindeth on Men the Belief of them, under the same Sanction. In which she, at least, shares Authority with God, seems to rival him, assumes an equal Power, by making Notions and Decrees of her own of equal Moment and Necessity to Salvation. Could one admit of her Ceremonies, yet, What good Christian can admit of *this*? No; this appeareth too much like the *Man of Sin* that St. Paul describeth, *who, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

So that, if the Dispute or Comparifon be between *Us* and the *Roman Church*, the Point is clear: Or, if the Question be directed, Whether a true and zealous Member of this Church can go over to the Communion of the Church of *Rome*? we say, never. And as this hath been abundantly manifested heretofore, so, I hope, should there be an Experiment made of this Kind, (which

Sermon
III.
~

Sermon (which God forbid!) the same will again
 III. appear. But to proceed. Let us take a
 transient View of other Churches and Societies, which boast a greater Spirituality and Reformation. But, What are *they*? Some are without Sacraments, without any settled Ministry or Teachers, without Creeds, or without any Profession of Faith, that we know of; and if such as these are any Parts of the Catholick Church, they are so unlike others, that a Man would wonder how they could *All*, in any Sense, be *One*. For, as far as the Word of God, or primitive Antiquity discovereth of this Model, there has been scarce ever any such Society, professing Christianity, before them: So that, if they are right, all others must be wrong, and never any Part of the Church right before them. For, When was ever the Church without Sacraments? So that, either these Men are not of the true Church of God, or else, such a prodigious Latitude is indulged by God, that Men may be of the Catholick Church under any Form almost, or Profession whatsoever; and then it will be little better than a vain Amusement to dispute, or trouble our Heads about such a Point as this, *viz.* who is, or is not, of the Church of Christ.

If we have been right in our Accounts of the Unity of the Catholick Church, about which

which I am in no Doubt, this will shew us Sermon
III.
the Defect of *other* Churches, who separate from *Ours* upon *lesser* Matters; and indeed, the *lesser* the Matters are, the more unjustifiable is the Separation; and so, That which is frequently pleaded in its Defence, is the greatest Aggravation: For, when Men agree in Doctrine, or Fundamentals, the Party that quits a Church or Communion will not be in Danger of *Heresy*, but *Schism*; and both these, when they are real, do most certainly cut Men off from the Church Catholick: So that if these Men agree with us in Essentials, as they sometimes say they do, I am not here afraid of *Heresy*, but *Schism*. And, as to this, if Men thoroughly and impartially studied its Nature, I am perswaded, that not such Things as a Surplice, a Form of Prayer, no, nor the Cross in Baptism, would appear to them justifiable Causes of a Separation. No, surely; somewhat of a more evil and enormous Nature must be found in a Church to drive others out of it, or else, for ought I know, the Sin may stick: And, I pray God it may not! To conclude this Head, If such Men as *Timothy*, *Titus*, &c. are necessary to a Church, to govern it, to supply it with proper Pastors, that is, if the Church is to continue as the Apostles planted it, it is no Commendation to be without such an Order;

Sermon der; yea, it may move a Doubt, Whether,
 III. by such a Defect, Men are rightly ordained
 to sacred Offices; and this, again, admin-
 istreth to other great Doubts and Que-
 stions, of which I shall decide nothing, but
 in Charity hope the Best: And so I shall,
 likewise, of the Devotion of these Socie-
 ties, which ought to be Sound and Chri-
 stian, in order to make a Christian Church;
 for what can we say of this, when these
 Societies have no Liturgies, no Prayers ex-
 tant, but their Devotion lieth only in the
 Head of every particular Teacher, and is,
 at least, more or less perfect, according to
 their several Abilities and Talents: Is this
 a Perfection likewise? If it be, it hath been
 hidden from the universal Church, in most
 Ages of the World.

Lastly, Let us, upon these Principles, take
 a short View of our own Church: Indeed,
 one cannot, with so good a Grace, praise
 one's *own* Church, because it looketh some-
 what like praising one's *Self*, and all Socie-
 ties will do the same, whether good or bad;
 but yet we hope not with so good Reason;
 We will submit this Matter to all proper
 and qualified Judges, to all Men well skill'd
 in Scripture, in Antiquity, possessed of the
 Spirit of God, and of upright and charita-
 ble Minds. We have had the Commenda-
 tions

tions of such Men as these, we hope, both at home and abroad. But we stand not upon the Authority of Men: We have a *surer Word of Prophecy*: If I mightily mistake not, we have Scripture, Antiquity, Reason to support us in our own Way, and vindicate us against all our Opposers: For if apostolical Doctrine, if Christian Charity, if the pure Administration of the Word and Sacraments, if primitive Order and Government, if sound and christian Devotion, will make a Church truly Christian; we may with Modesty believe, and affirm ours to be such: For we have in our Possession the most ancient Creeds, the most ancient Form of Government; we have the several Orders, evidently, of the Apostle's Institution; yea, we have the purest and most ancient Prayers; in a Word, we not only resemble the ancient Church in Essence, but in Form, Feature, and Circumstantials; and, I hope, we are not the Worse, but a great deal the Better for all this. And I speak not this of Course, but upon some Enquiry; and, I beg you to believe, upon the most sound and thorough Persuasion, and Conviction of Mind and Conscience; well knowing, firmly believing, that, one Day, I must answer for what I affirm here. I say, in my poor Opinion, no Church upon the Face of the Earth displayeth so much Resemblance

Sermon
III.

semblance to the Primitive as *this*. Happy, and blessed Reformers! who, through an extraordinary Grace, an extraordinary Providence, an extraordinary Learning, an extraordinary Diligence and Zeal, yea, some of them, through the Expence of their Blood, settled us where we are, in so golden a Mean, between Superstition and Phantasticism! Could they have restored primitive Discipline, as well as primitive Faith and Doctrine, they had made a glorious Church indeed! but they did what they could do. To effect *this*, since the *spiritual* Power lies mixt with the *Temporal*, peculiar Help from this Quarter seems needful; and may God inspire, one Day, the Hearts of Men in Authority to afford it, to compleat so noble a Work! That the Church may always have the Power of Relieving her self of so heavy a Burthen as That of Atheists, Unbelievers, and ungodly Men, whensoever they shall infest her. Let the Memory of these our Reformers be always precious and dear to us! Let us follow their Steps, imitate their Examples, pursue their Views! For, sure, God directed them. Their Writings are a Treasure, fraught with profound Learning, Judgment, and Wit, that best teach us to steer between the two Rocks of Popery and Enthusiasm.

Above

Above all, as we are of the Church, visi- Serm^{on}
ble, so let us labour to be of the Church in- III.
visible! that is, of the Number of those
whom our Saviour's Spirit animates, and
resides in, who truly compose his Body,
and whom only he will own at the last
Day! It were a mighty Reflection and Scan-
dal on us, should we boast of the Excellen-
cy of our Church, and no proportionable
Effects of it appear in our Lives. For the
End of a Church is to cure the Disorders
and Evils of Mens Minds, to instruct them
in all Vertue, and prepare them for ever-
lasting Life and Glory; and the better a
Church is, in all Reason, the more effe-
ctually should it do this. Let us therefore
demonstrate the Excellency of our Church,
by our Proficiency in all Christian Know-
ledge and Vertue! and this was one Rea-
son, antiently, why the true Church was
term'd *Catholick*, because its Doctrine and
Grace was an universal *Remedy* proved a
Cure to all the Corruptions, and Diseases of
Mens Minds. Let *our* Church be known to
be *Catholick* this Way too, as well as *others*,
in the powerful Effects it has upon all her
true Sons, so that they may as much ex-
ceed others in all Vertue, as they do in the
Means of it. Have we the pure Doctrines
of Christianity preached and urged? Have
we the Sacraments rightly administred?
and,

Sermon and, Doth the Spirit of God attend all these

III.

Ordinances, and make them useful to the Purposes to which he hath instituted them?

This we all believe: These are all Advantages of a true Church, which no false Church hath: Should not, therefore, this be seen? Should it not be known; I mean that, as a true Church, we have the Spirit of God amongst us, accompanying, and enforcing the outward Means of Grace and Salvation? It should be so, doubtless, or else it were all Talk: And did we all labour after this, surely, a great Honour would it procure our Church, as well as the divine Protection and Blessing; when, out of it, issued such Proficients, such accomplish'd Christians, must not the whole World conclude it, not a Name only, but a Place of the most divine and heavenly Education, the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, and of all *Vertue*: Then it would appear, as it was intended, the Light of the World, that would direct, convince all Men, draw all Men after it; then should we have no need to fear Men, yea, we might despise a greater Power than Human; for then must it be found, that our Church is built upon the true *Rock*, sure and stedfast; and we have the Lord's Promise, that *the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it*: To which, he cannot be a right Christian that refuses to say, *Amen*.

§ SERMON



SERMON IV.

Of the Excellency of the CHURCH
of ENGLAND.

LUKE XI. 2.

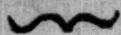
When ye Pray, say, —

THE Excellency of our Church Sermon
having been already in gene- IV.
T ral spoken to, it seemeth to
me very useful and necessary
to descend to *Particulars*, and
especially to such of *them* as prove Matter
of Offence and Objection, to Men who
divide from our Communion: And, amongst
these, it is well known, a most considerable

VOL. I. H One

Sermon

IV.



One is, *Forms of Prayer*, in general: Our Church requiring her Clergy, and all such as frequent her Communion, to use such Prayers as she hath composed; in which, she hath the Misfortune to differ with all Sorts of Dissenters in this Nation. The Practice of them all, howsoever widely different in other Matters, being contrary to ours in this, they having no publick Liturgies, no Forms of Prayer, neither Teachers, nor People standing in Need, it seemeth, of such Helps, being above them, and despising them: For they all profess, that they can, and do pray *extempore*, as it is termed: And this is reckoned a marvellous Perfection, in dissenting Churches, an extraordinary *Gift* in their Teachers, and the Want of this Liberty and Ability in us, is Matter of no small Complaint, and Disparagement: And, perhaps, there is not a greater Inveiglement upon common Men, a greater Charm, a greater Support of the dissenting Congregations than this Plea, and Practice in their Teachers: For other Controversies and Differences between us, common Men little mind, and less understand; but this Liberty, and Ability of Praying without Forms, without Helps, yea, without Premeditation, this is wonderful, this raises mighty Admiracion and Applause, this lifts such as exercise it, far above

above others, who do not, or cannot do it. Sermon
IV.
No wonder, therefore, that illiterate Men, who never examined into the true Nature of Prayer, are mightily affected with such Performances, adhere to a Church where they think there is so much Spirituality, so extraordinary Talents and Gifts, compared to those of others. I shall therefore, from these Words of our Saviour,

First, Endeavour to defend our Church in this Particular, in her Establishing and Using Forms, in opposition to unpremeditated and extempore Prayer, and set forth the *Lawfulness*, the *Wisdom*, and *Advantages* of the Former, and the *Vanity* and evil Consequences of the *Latter*.

Then, *Secondly*, in the Application consider, I hope, with the utmost Impartiality and Charity, the Objections which have been offer'd against Forms, and the Pleas of Dissenters for the Contrary.

Now, for the *Ist*, the *Lawfulness*, *Wisdom*, and *Advantages* of Forms, in publick Worship, in Opposition to unpremeditated and extempore Prayers, I have these few Considerations to propose to all unprejudiced and understanding Men, who would examine and judge by *right Reason*, and the *Word of God*.

Sermon

IV.



1. It seemeth to me evident, that *human Reason*, impartially consulted, pronounceth for Forms and Liturgies in the publick Service of God, in Opposition to the contrary Usage and Practice. This Faculty discovers to us the Being, and the infinite Perfections of God, the infinite Distance that is between us and him, and consequently, inculcateth upon us the utmost Awe and Reverence in our approaching and addressing him. 'Tis true, indeed, this Awe and Reverence is seated in our Minds; but if it be really there, if we have worthy Apprehensions of God, a due Sense of his infinite Majesty and Greatness, if we have devout Affections towards him, all these Things will unavoidably influence our Words and Expressions, render us exceeding careful in what Sense and Language we bespeak him, that we utter nothing vain, idle, unbecoming so holy, so wise, so great, so powerful a Being: If we are not under such Apprehensions as these, I am afraid, we are not penetrated deeply with the Sense of the divine Perfections and Majesty. And I am the more confirm'd in this Opinion, because heathen Authors, who have had no other Guide but impartial Reason, have spoken to this Effect, in Vertue of it. Saith *Socrates*, who was certainly the greatest and wisest Heathen,

Plato, Al. ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μοι πολλῆς φυλακῆς δεῖσθαι καὶ σκέψεως, ὅ, τι
cib. 2. ποτὲ πηλείων ἐστὶ, καὶ μὴ. So that it standeth as a Di-

ctate

State of human Reason, what all Men must allow, That the greatest and utmost Care is to be taken, in our Speeches and Addresses to God, that what we term our Prayers, ought to be the Perfection of our Understandings, and that in no Speeches are we so much concerned to be pertinent, and wise, as in those we make to the great Being: This flows from the Reverence that all Men ought to have towards God, in worshipping him, and, not a Little of what we term divine Worship, consisteth in *this*. And, Can human Understanding speak as pertinently and wisely, without Premeditation, as with it? Can we take less Care about any Thing, than by never troubling our selves at all about it? And the Profession of extempore Prayer is no better than this, than to speak or say any Thing to God, that immediately comes into our Minds; for we must say this, or nothing, when we throw off Forms, which is a Thing that natural Light condemneth and abhorreth, in regard to God, as inconsistent with the Awe and Reverence we ought to bear towards him. The Vanity of this will be seen in other Cases: What Man will bespeak a great and wise King without Premeditation? The best and ablest Orators were not fond of this, and their finest Productions of this Kind were the Result of much Time and Consideration; and if no Man's Parts

Sermon
IV.

Sermon of Gifts will qualify him to bespeak and ad-

IV. dress an earthly King without Premeditation, if *here* we are not wont to trust to the immediate Dictate of our Thoughts, but come provided, weigh before-hand the Matter and the Words; if the Contrary to This be reckoned Boldness and Presumption, Why should it not be esteemed the same, yea, much more so, in regard to God? How come we to encourage our selves in a Fancy, That we can make freer and bolder with God, than Man? The *Jams.* were of this Opinion, in their declined and degenerate State, that any Thing would do, the Blind, the Lame, the Sick, in their Sacrifices to God; and, no doubt, they had *piously* to say for themselves, that God needed not these Things, chiefly respected the Heart: But the Prophet, to raise in them Shame of such an Indignity and Hypocrisy, argues with them upon the same Principle, Go, saith he, *offer it now to thy Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person, saith the Lord of Hosts?* Let us not deceive our selves, God requireth as much Care in our Addresses to him, as Man doth; and from whence can a Want of this flow, but from Misapprehensions, or very unworthy Notions of God.

Malac.
1. 8.

To conclude this Argument; many, I think, of such as uphold this Notion and Practice of extempore *Praying*, have drop'd
the

the Way of extempore *Preaching*; they com-
 pose, if I mistake not, their Discourses at
 home, and make use of *Notes* in Publick, as
 others do: So that here they depend not on
 the immediate Suggestion of their Fancies and
 Judgments; here it is no Disparagement to
 read, when they address themselves to Men,
 yea, to Men of far less Understanding and
 Wisdom than themselves: And is it not
 marvellously strange, That the same Men
 who are distrustful of their Abilities, in re-
 gard to their Fellow-Creatures, should not be
 as much distrustful of themselves, when
 they speak to God? Is it easier (we speak it
 with due Reverence) to harangue the infi-
 nitely wise God, than weak and ignorant
 Men? The more impartially any Man con-
 siders of this, I am persuaded, the more a Pa-
 radox will this appear to him. This is the
1st Consideration: The *Awe* and *Reverence*,
 which natural Reason inculcateth on us to-
 wards the great and supream Being, recom-
 mendeth Forms of Prayer, instead of the
 Contrary. But

2. Forms of Prayer and Liturgies secure
 the Honour of divine and publick Worship,
 whereas the Contrary leaves it at a mighty
 Risque and Hazard. Prayer, in its largest
 Signification, is the most necessary and es-
 sential Part of the publick Service, from

Sermon whence the *Church of God* was, of old, de-
 IV. nominated: And a lame, indiscreet, imper-
 ~~~~~fect Performance of this, will unavoidably  
 expose the Church, the publick Service, to  
 great Ridicule and Contempt. Without all  
 Question, jejune, empty Discourses from the  
 Pulpit are a great Misfortune, but yet, not  
 near so great as a Defect in publick Devot-  
 tion, for in this all are concerned, all must  
 join, and if there be any Thing in it weak,  
 frivolous, absurd, contrary to the Word and  
 Will of God, in *that* are all wise and good  
 Men disappointed, yea, exceedingly scan-  
 dalized. But Miscarriages in Sermons, not  
 so much affect, or rather (if I may so ex-  
 press it) shake a Congregation, because there  
 is no Necessity of assenting to every Thing  
 that is said: Sermons are Addresses to Men,  
 and Impertinency, yea Falsehood, directed to  
 Men, is not near so offensive as when direct-  
 ed to Almighty God. The Fault and Sin is  
 then singly the Preacher's, and the Hearers  
 are not involved in it; but Errors in Devot-  
 tion reach all, make all guilty who join, and  
 exceedingly disturb those who do not: So  
 that every wise Church is exceedingly more  
 tender of the *Devotion* than the *Sermon*; be-  
 cause every good and wise Christian is so, it  
 being the most monstrous Thing to him, if  
 when he intends to pray to God, he should  
 be engaged to do quite otherwise, or, at least,



do it in Words and Sense, in his Opinion, **Sermon**  
unfuitable to the Divine Majesty : This no **IV.**  
good Christian can brook.

And one would really think it utterly needless to dispute, whether Forms did not better secure this End ; the Dignity, and Honour of the publick Worship, than the Contrary : For it amounts to this Question, Whether a Man is not more certain to speak gravely, solemnly, fully, in all respects agreeably to the Divine Majesty, and the Wants of Men, upon Meditation than without it ? or, Whether a Man is not more secure against all Failures, all Surprize, by having Devotion pen'd before him, than by inventing it all, Matter, Words, Connexion, Order, every Thing upon the Spot. A Man that can read is safe, and the Devotion of the Congregation is safe, under all Accidents, according to publick Forms and Liturgies : but, Who is safe, or what Devotion safe in the *free and extempore* Way ? Were every *Pastor* permitted to *compose* Prayers for his Congregation. And this, by the utmost Application and Study, even *this* would not come near the Perfection and Advantage of publick Forms and Liturgies ; for, in this Case, every Church would but enjoy the Benefit of the Understanding, Wisdom, and Piety of its own Pastor ; but, in the Other, in publick Forms and Liturgies, every particular

Sermon particular Church receives the Benefit of the Understanding, Piety, and Judgment of all great and holy Men, and not only of the present, but of the Ages past; for Liturgies are, or ought to be formed upon the Model of the ancient as well as modern Times: And is it reasonable to affirm, that any one *single Pastor*, altho' of never so great Abilities, is likely to be capable of composing as perfect Forms, as the Pastors and Governours of the whole *Catholic Church*? This were Madnels enough of all Conscience to assert; but to assert, that the Devotions of the Church are as safe, as wise, and perfect, when left to the Dictates of every particular Pastor, good or bad, wise or foolish, ignorant or learned, and that too in an extempore Way, without his Study or Premeditation, this, surely, is a Fancy so repugnant to common Sense, that I know not what Name to call it by.

Alas! how different are the Talents and Endowments of Men! *Can all*, says the Apostle, *Speak with Tongues*? Can all pray extempore? The Foundation of this Gift is much laid in Nature, in a Quickness and Liveliness of Fancy, in a good Assurance, or Strength of Nerves and Spirits. How many Men, do we see, who, when retired, and in their Closets, are able to think closely and pertinently, to entertain, instruct, and delight the World with their Labours and Productions,

ductions, who yet in common Conversation appear flat, insipid, are much out-done by others in a Readiness, Quickness, Volubility, and Turn of Words, who have not, peradventure, the hundredth Part of their Learning, Piety, and Judgment? and, upon Observation, I doubt not but the greatest Part of truly wise, deep, and learned Men will be found to labour under this Misfortune, under a Deadness of Fancy, and in consequence of this, an Unreadiness of Words, which, indeed their close Attention, and the Intenseness of their Thoughts and Studies naturally tend to produce. The famous Dr. Hammond was a strange Instance of this, who was so far from being able to exercise this Gift of Praying extempore, that he had not Courage and Assurance enough to pray *memoriter*, or from his own Memory; to such Surprizes was this great Man liable in the Duty of publick Prayer! What can be done here? Must all such Men as these be dismiss'd the Church? but, Where would be the Advantage of That? Not any to the Church it self, certainly, to exclude her ablest and best Divines, the best and ablest Defenders both of the Christian Religion in *general*, and the Church in *particular*; this would be a pleasant Discipline in the Church, I mean to Atheists, Infidels, and Dissenters, upon such Pretexes, to deprive her self of her greatest Lights and Ornaments;



Sermon  
IV.

naments; What sad Work would this introduce? According to this View, one may be justly in Pain, not only for such Men as Dr. *Hammond*, who could be illy spared in the Church, but for far greater indeed: I doubt whether the Apostle St. *Paul* himself might not be liable to Exception in some such Particulars; for although I would not presume to say, he could not pray extempore; yet it is manifest, according to the Opinion of some of his Hearers, that there was some Defect in his *Elocution*; they liked his *Letters* much better than his *Discourses*; and others, those false Prophets, who rivalled and opposed him, had the Preference in the outward Ornaments of Speech. But to return to our Argument. If under the Care of the wisest, most pious, most learned Men, the publick Devotion is likely to suffer, and miscarry in the extempore Way, how much more is it likely to do so, when committed to others, as it frequently must, to *Novices*, (to use the Words of the Apostle) to Men of little Learning, little Judgment; when every raw, unexperienced Youth is left to furnish out Prayers from his little Stock, for the whole Congregation, for the gravest and most pious Men; must be their Mouth, contain their Devotion, their Sense, their Wisdom, their Knowledge of God, their Wants, the Wants of the whole Congregation? I know  
not

not whether I more pity the Pastor, or the Sermon  
Congregation in this Way. I will only say, IV.  
without any the least Reflection on Men in  
holy Orders, What a Mefs of Devotion would  
this frequently produce? What Scandal on  
the Church? What Offence to wise and pi-  
ous Men?

But 3dly, Publick Forms and Liturgies  
tend more exceedingly to preserve and pro-  
mote *Union* in the Christian Church, than  
the contrary: Of what Use and Glory *Union*  
is to any Church, or, indeed, to any Society  
whatever, and what a Scandal and Pest, *Di-  
vision* is, the most ignorant cannot be insen-  
sible. *Union*, therefore, is to be secured and  
promoted by all just, and holy Ways; and  
of this publick Forms of Prayer will appear  
a notable Means, to any one who shall im-  
partially consider it. As there is but *one*  
*Faith*, *one Baptism*, so did all the Churches of  
the Christian World antiently agree to *one*  
*Form of sound Words*, to one Creed, and made  
Profession of their Faith in it: And, What  
Advantage and Honour did this derive upon  
the Catholick Church, and its Professors?  
And what if all Churches used the same pub-  
lick Devotion, used the same Sense in their  
different Languages, or the same Forms? ac-  
cording to my poor Apprehension of Things,  
this would appear lovely, a lovely Order  
and

and Uniformity: I mean, if the Forms were agreeable to God's Word; and there could be no Doubt of That, if the Governours of the Church were as Pious, as Good, as Judicious, and Learned as they ought to be. The Apostle speaketh of *glorifying God with one Heart, and one Mouth*, and, Why not with the same Words? This appeareth to me a greater, and more intimate Union. But this cannot be hoped for in this mortal State; but approaches to it partake of some Degrees of Perfection: National Churches using the same Forms, is not only a Mark, but a Promotion of Union; for this secures the publick Worship of every particular Church, of every particular Christian; there would be no Pretensions in one Church of the same Communion more than in others, when the Devotions were the same in all; no Fancies in weak ignorant Men about the Abilities of particular Pastors in praying, no real Objections to wise and good Christians, as to the Defects of the Devotion in his own Church, no Emulations between particular Pastors or Congregations, and consequently, in all respects, this appeareth an admirable Ground of Union. For, What are the Pleas of Men who delight in rambling from one Church to another? Are they not the Abilities of particular Pastors, as to *Teaching*? that they profit more by one than another?

in



in which, how right they are, generally, I Sermon  
will not dispute; but suppose them all right IV.  
in this Matter, all this Emulation, all this  
Tendency to Separation, turns upon the dif-  
ferent Opinions of Men as to *Preaching*; but  
if *praying* was left as loose, if we had no  
settled Forms, if about *this* there was as  
much Question, as much Emulation, as much  
Room for Fancy, for Objection and Dissent,  
I believe it would puzzle the wisest Gover-  
nors in the World to keep Men in Union,  
according to the present State and Corrup-  
tion of human Nature. If you say, What  
did the Churches of God do anciently? I say,  
in my Opinion, quite otherwise than this  
Notion suggesteth, they had Forms agreeable  
to the Word of God, and sound Reason, which  
among other admirable Expedients, secured  
and promoted the Union of the ancient  
Churches and Christians.

This is the *Fourth Thing*; The *Practice* of  
the *Primitive Church*. Before I proceed to  
cite any Authorities for Forms and Litu-  
rgies, out of the Writings of the ancient Chri-  
stians, it may be of use, to render their Te-  
stimony the more convincing, to observe one  
Thing, and that is, the same Writers, who  
plainly import, that the publick Devotion  
was under the Direction of Forms; I say,  
the same Writers testify at that Time, that  
the

Sermon the Church of God was not destitute of miraculous Gifts, of Healing the Sick, Casting out Devils, divine Inspiration and Prophecy; which extraordinary Powers and Gifts (one would think if any Thing could) would have rendered Forms unnecessary: But yet, if they used Forms under such high Advantages, (which hardly any Christian Church enjoyeth now) this the more recommendeth Forms, shewes us the Vanity of such Pretence, that the Spirit renders them Useless, when we see they were used by truly inspired *Men*, by *Churches* truly, and divinely inspired. But, as to what these ancient Christians say about Forms —

*Justin Martyr*, an ancient and learned Father, in his first Apology for the Christian Faith, not only teacheth us what Doctrines they held, but how they performed divine Service, and celebrated the Sacraments: It is needless to repeat all he saith, it may suffice to observe, that he acquainteth us how the Christians performed their Devotions to God, after Baptism; the Bishop or Priest offer'd up Prayers to God (in which the whole Congregation joined) for themselves, and the newly enlighten'd or baptiz'd, and for all other Christians throughout the World; that God would grant them the Knowledge of the Truth; so that they might be found fruitful of good Works, and demonstrate this in a good

good Conversation, in a strict Observation Sermon  
 of the divine Laws and Precepts. This they IV.  
 pray'd ~~enjoy~~ with the utmost Intensity and  
 Force of their Spirits. There is, farther, an  
 Account of other Parts of Devotion. But of  
 whom doth the Martyr speak this? of his  
 own particular Church only, or of the pub-  
 lick Devotion of all Christian Churches?  
 Without doubt of the Latter; of the Devo-  
 tion of Christians in general; for this is to  
 the Purpose of his Argument, so that all  
 Christians pray'd after this Manner. But  
 how could this be, if all Christians pray'd  
 not alike? if they were not under Rules and  
 Forms as to *this*? Perhaps this, singly, pro-  
 veth not that the Devotion of the whole Chri-  
 stian Church was *written*, but writing, *singly*,  
 maketh not a Form; but, that they were as  
 much written as ours, is more than probable:  
 For, How could the Martyr affirm, that thus  
 the Christians pray'd, if the Devotions of  
 the Christian Church in general were not  
 known? and, How could they be known,  
 without being committed to Writing? Can  
 any Dissenter affirm, how Teachers of his  
 own Profession pray, in foreign Parts and  
 Congregations, where he never was, and  
 where there are no Devotions to be seen?  
 Can he say, *We*, all of our Perswasion, pray  
*Thus*, as *Justin* here doth of the Christians in  
 general? Such an Assertion as this supposeth  
 VOL. I. I disse



Sermon

IV.



different Churches under the same Rules and Methods as to Prayer, that their Devotion could be known, which is not easy to be known without Forms, or in the extempore Way, where, not only every Pastor differeth from another, but the same Pastor professeth to differ from himself. This is more confirmed from the References or Notes of Dr. *Grabe*, who, in these Places of *Justin*, with the fairest Probability, sheweth, that the Martyr alludeth to, or rather taketh some of his Expressions from the apostolical Constitutions, in which those very Prayers and Praises are preserved, and which answer most exactly to *Justin's* Description of them; against which Book, altho' Interpolation and Spuriousness in some Places have been objected by learned Men; yet, few or none of them doubt the Antiquity of the Book in general, and the Matter is plain beyond Dispute. But we have no need to insist so long on a single Author. *Irenæus*, a Christian Writer, whose Age reacheth very near to the *Apostolical*, very clearly implieth settled Forms of Prayer in the Church when he wrote. For having to deal with Hereticks, who introduced a strange Jargon into the Christian Church, about *Beings* they called *Aeons*, sheweth them defending their Notions from the Practice of the Christian Church, yea, from its Prayers; the Hereticks affirm that, in celebrating the

Iren. ad-  
ver. Hær.  
l. i. Grabe  
Ed.

Eu-

*Eucharist*, we say so and so; which, I say again, could never be, unless the Catholick Church had settled Forms, and constantly used them; for this implieth, according to its obvious Sense, and all fair Construction, a Method, a Form of Prayer: 'Twas notoriously known by Hereticks, that Catholicks pray'd not only to such a Sense, but in such Words, and That always; and, Is not this a Form?

Sermon  
IV.

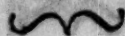
And, furthermore, *St. Basil*, in enumerating the several Customs of the Church, of which there is no express Command in Scripture, mentions the Prayers in the *Eucharist*, which, he says, the Church had used from its first Establishment, or derived from the Apostles: If these Prayers were modern, were introduced in his, or a little before his Time, must not this learned Governour of the Church have known it? How could he speak of this as immemorial, as ever being in the Church, if in his Time, or a little before, it had crept in, and was a modern Corruption and Practice?

Basil.  
De Sp.  
Sanc.

*St. Cyprian* not only inveigheth against crude and hasty Prayers to God, which is somewhat like *Extempore*, but speaketh of the very Words of the Exhortation before publick Devotion, amongst which was, *Sursum Corda, Lift up your Hearts*; and the Response of the People, *we lift them up to the*

Sermon

IV.



*Lord* : And this was not only of Use in one Church, but as far as appeareth in All : For this is mentioned by other Fathers, by *St. Cyril*, *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Augustin*, as a standing Form or Method in the Catholick Church. Now, Is it not wonderful that the Exhortation to Prayer, should be thus universally the same, That the old Christians should be so very formal in this, (as I may so express it :) That the Pastor should not be left at his Liberty in so inconsiderable a Thing as this, and yet be at Liberty in the Devotions themselves ? I am sure this favoureth not of the extempore Way.

I might farther alledge the *Fragments* that have been left of ancient Liturgies, and collected by learned Men, their Agreement, and the like, which could never be without any Foundation at all, without some Liturgies, and Forms of Prayer in the ancient Christian Church. I might, too, alledge the Example of all modern and reformed Churches, the *Calvinistical*, the *Lutheran*, who, as Men report well acquainted with their Usage, are not destitute of Forms in publick Worship ; but, in truth, I grow tedious to my self on this Head, and must be much more so, to Men of better Understanding.

The *last* Thing I shall urge for Forms is, *The Word of God*, and I shall not look over the whole Bible for this, but reflect briefly upon



upon what our Saviour himself hath delivered on it: To omit, therefore, the Authority and Sense of King Solomon, which seems extremely pertinent and weighty to this Purpose, when he bids us, *not to be rash with our Mouths, nor hasty in our Hearts, to utter any Thing before God; for God is in Heaven, and we upon Earth, therefore our Words ought to be few;* and, I think, we cannot easily be more *rash* nor *hasty* in Heart or Mouth, than to utter any Thing to God, that comes first into our Heads upon the Spot, without Premeditation, and consequently, we cannot more contradict this Precept than in the extempore Way. But our Saviour's Words are of greater Authority to all Christians; and it seemeth to me really wonderful! a strange Instance of the Prejudice and Weakness of human Understandings, that there should be any Controversies upon this Point among Christians, after the Declarations of our Lord. For, Doth he not *here* prescribe a Form to his own Apostles? and, Can we doubt but they used it, notwithstanding their Inspiration? As sure as they performed any other of his Commandments, as sure as they administered the Sacrament, or any Thing else in his Words, they did This. Doth he not caution us against *vain Repetitions* in Prayer? Yea, Doth he not use a Form himself? He doth so; if using the *same Sense* in

IV.

Eccl. 5, 2.

Sermon the *same Words* be a Form. For he did this  
 IV. in his *Agony*: and, May we not act after  
 both his Command and Example? This not  
 only argueth the *Lawfulness*, but the *Expe-*  
*diency*, and *Preferableness* of Forms. For,  
 What Christian will presume to deny, that  
 what our Lord taught and practised was not  
 only lawful in it self, but most expedient,  
 yea best, most edifying, most acceptable to  
 God?

What such as differ from us urge, to evade  
 this Authority, to me, appeareth little bet-  
 ter than trifling: If this seems harsh, let the  
 honest Christian judge. They say, that this  
 Prayer is intended as a Sort of *Directory*, as  
 a *Model*, contains the Matter of our Devo-  
 tions, or what Things we ought to pray to  
 God for. But seeing we may pray to the  
 Purpose of the *Lord's Prayer*, Why may we  
 not use his Words? Can we invent better?  
 St. Cyprian was of a different Opinion, he  
 says, our Prayers are much more efficacious  
 with God, when we use his *Son's* Words, than  
 when we use our own; he acknowledgeth  
 his *Son's* Words, when we address our selves  
 to him in them. He hath many beautiful Pas-  
 sages to this Purpose, which I cannot tran-  
 scribe; it is enough, I think, beyond the  
 Power of any Reasoning, any subtil Di-  
 stinctions to shake *that*. Our Lord prescrib-  
 ed a Form, used a Form, and therefore  
 Forms

Forms are most expedient, best in publick Sermon  
Worship; and our Church hath the Authority of Christ (God be praised) for it, which  
surely others want.)  IV.

I come, by Way of Application, to the  
Pleas of Dissenters against *Forms*, and for  
the *Free Way*.

And here, their Pleas or Objections have  
been different; every *Sett*, I think, is refined,  
they reform, amend and gloss-over the  
Opinions of their *Founders*, which is an  
Happiness we do not envy them, but rather  
pray that they may every Day more refine  
in this Sense, throw off more and more Ab-  
surdity, and come nearer to the Truth: And  
we may rejoice indeed in this, and thank  
God; and it would be well if they them-  
selves, especially their Teachers, were sen-  
sible of it, that their Refinements lie in  
nearer Approaches to the Orders and Senti-  
ments of our Church and Divines: We pray  
God to prosper this, so as to clear them of  
all Obstinacy, as well as of all Objections.  
And this I say, because I would not trouble  
my self with obsolete Objections, such as  
the present Supporters of this Way desert.  
For, What have we to do with the Dead?  
let their Errors die with them, or, at least,  
it would not be fair to charge them upon the  
Living. But what do these say? I know not  
a more learned Man, in this Way, than the  
Author of the *Vindicia*. I 4 And,



Sermon

IV.



And even this Author allows, as to Forms in *general*, that they are not *unlawful* in themselves. Yea, our Saviour composed a Form, and deliver'd it to his Disciples, to be used by them in their Prayers. And further yet, other Forms, besides our Lords, may be useful to ignorant, unskilful Teachers, who cannot pray without them. These are Concessions, which were not, I think, so frankly made of old. Some, if I mistake not, within my Memory, thought it not a Matter of Duty to use the Lord's Prayer in publick, or at least did not constantly use it: But if all of this Way use it now (and he must know best) we are glad of it.

But Forms of Prayer, says this Author, are not unlawful in themselves: It were really strange if they should, when our Lord prescribed and used one. But is this all? Doth our Saviour's Command and Example only render Forms not unlawful in themselves? I should think they do much more, not only render them not unlawful in themselves, but best, most expedient, better than unpremeditated, extempore Prayer. The least that can follow from our Lord's Precept and Practice is this: Our Lord's prescribing a Form, renders a Form not unlawful, Is not this short and defective? a poor Idea, certainly, it raises in a Man's Understanding of the Wisdom, Virtue, and Authority of

of the Son of God, that his Command but Sermon  
barely renders a Thing not sinful. I am IV.  
sure it soundeth better in the Ears of any  
Christian, that it maketh a Practice best,  
most perfect; and this Conclusion appeareth  
so evidently to me, that I should satisfy my  
self in saying no more about it, being sure,  
that no Objections, no Reasonings can be of  
any Weight against our Saviour's Wisdom,  
and Authority, which must be lessen'd in  
this Case, if the contrary to his Command  
could be supported: But yet, however, let  
us attend farther.

Forms may be of Use to ignorant Teachers. Yea, they are of Use to others: Did not the Apostles themselves use this Form, even after their Inspiration? This Author cannot deny it, he freely owns it. So that Forms, and the greatest Gifts are consistent, and the Intent of Forms is not barely to help the Unexperienced and Ignorant: And if the most gifted Men may use the *Lord's Prayer*, why not *others*, which appear to them as good, or better, than any they can compose with all their Gifts? No! by no means, says this Gentleman. But why not? let us hear, for in *this* the main Plea consisteth,

1. Says our Author, it is a Thing exceeding *useful* to the Church, that the Minister should

Sermon should *pour out Prayers* (*fundant preces* are his Words) without being bound to any Form; for, we know, it cleaves to human Nature to be less attentive to Things often repeated. This he owns is a Fault in the Hearers, but a Fault that ought by all means to be amended. So that, according to our Author, the free extempore Way engages more the Attention of the Hearers; in *this* lies its principal Advantage, and the Defect of Forms is the contrary. I shall consider and answer this distinctly.

1<sup>st</sup>. The *Foundation* of this, that Forms less engage the Attention, is very disputable, if not false; herein this Teacher opposes not only *Divines*, but *Logicians*, *Metaphysicians*, *Mathematicians*, who are wont to practise, and recommend outward Signs and Writing, to this very Purpose, when they would reason closely; and for fixing the Attention, and preventing our Thoughts from wandring, to write, to erect Figures, they reckon a good Expedient; and it answers in Fact. For, to see something before us, to the Purpose of what we would think of, must needs somewhat engage the Attention to it: For, by the Order of Nature, our Eyes raise *Ideas*, and seeing the Things, or Marks that will excite them, must needs be better than winking, or seeing other Things;  
Dresses,



Dresses, and the like; and I doubt not but common Men find this true by Experience. Their using their Prayer-books, and reading the Devotion with the Pastor, more fixes their Attention, than Harkning only, or Staring and Gaping about.

2<sup>dly</sup>. *Variety*, say these Men, engages the Attention. Granting this; yet, What is the Attention that is thus engaged by a Novelty of Expression? There may be Attention without Devotion, and every Thing that gains the *Attention* may not promote *Devotion*. This is certain, a Man may be attentive to any Discourse, composed with great Elegancy, and yet not devout in it, for there may be no Devotion or Religion in it: The Ground of this Attention is not Devotion, but the Nature of the Composition, the Manner of its Delivery; this tickles and amuses the Fancy; and so a Man may be engaged by the Novelty of *Flowers*, and *Rhetoric* in Prayer, but yet never the more devout. The Gentleman himself says, to stand in need of this *Variety*, and *Novelty* of Expression, is a Fault; we say so too, it is an *Itch* that ought to be *cured*, not *gratified*. And I will presume to add farther, if only the bare *Novelty*, *Variety* of Expression engages the Attention in this Kind of Prayer, the Devotion is not mended by it, the Man  
would

Sermon would be as devout without this Attention  
 IV. as with it.

Will any sober Christian say, That Variety, Novelty of Expression, is the *Ground*, the *Motive* of his Attention in Prayer? I thought, Sense of a Man's Wants, Sense of the infinite Majesty of God, Apprehensions of our Sins, Fears of the divine Punishments, Love of God, and of heavenly Things, were properer Grounds for the pious Christian's Attention in Prayer, than so poor a Thing as *Novelty of Expression*. Where these Grounds and Engagements to Attention are wanting in Prayer, a Man may be most profoundly Attentive to Variety of Expression, without being in the least Degree, the more devout.

3dly, It seemeth very plain to me, that this extempore Way, which leaveth the whole Congregation under Uncertainty, both as to the Matter and Words of their Prayer, until the Teacher hath utter'd them; this, I say, seems, instead of *promoting* true Devotion to be a very great *Obstruction* to it, because it engages the Mind to too many Things at once. *Attentive*, indeed, a Man must be, in this Way, if he would know what he prays for; and this is not all: He must, after he understands what is offered up to God, consider or exercise his Judgment about it, to know whether it be proper or  
 not;

not; and when he is satisfied of That, there remaineth yet, that the Heart or Affections be proportionably moved, or elated, (in which, not a Little of the Spirit of true Devotion consisteth,) and all this is a great deal of Work incumbent upon the Mind at once, and some of it is likely to be but lamely and imperfectly performed; and by that time a Man has attended, consider'd of the Matter, and Words of a Petition; by that time a Man has joined, and endeavoured to raise his Soul to the Purpose of it, What is become of the Speaker? surely he is gone off into other Matter, other Petitions, leaves the Hearer, the *Attender*, the Considerer behind; much of this Devotion must be lost, or much of it very imperfectly performed, and great Distraction and Interruption must it introduce, unless Men have Minds different from others, Understandings of so strange a Quickness and Capacity as to be able to exert several Acts at once, and much better too, than if taken up with fewer. This hath been often urged to the Advantage of Forms, and it is not easy to give a satisfactory Answer to it. But because this Gentleman seemeth much concerned about Unattention, and Distraction in Prayer, lamenteth this Infirmary in human Nature, and would prevent it, we will join with him in so pious and useful a Design, and hope that

Sermon  
IV.

(not)



Sermon would be as devout without this Attention  
 IV. as with it.

Will any sober Christian say, That Variety, Novelty of Expression, is the *Ground*, the *Motive* of his Attention in Prayer? I thought, Sense of a Man's Wants, Sense of the infinite Majesty of God, Apprehensions of our Sins, Fears of the divine Punishments, Love of God, and of heavenly Things, were properer Grounds for the pious Christian's Attention in Prayer, than so poor a Thing as *Novelty of Expression*. Where these Grounds and Engagements to Attention are wanting in Prayer, a Man may be most profoundly Attentive to Variety of Expression, without being in the least Degree, the more devout.

3dly, It seemeth very plain to me, that this extempore Way, which leaveth the whole Congregation under Uncertainty, both as to the Matter and Words of their Prayer, until the Teacher hath utter'd them; this, I say, seems, instead of *promoting* true Devotion to be a very great *Obstruction* to it, because it engages the Mind to too many Things at once. *Attentive*, indeed, a Man must be, in this Way, if he would know what he prays for; and this is not all: He must, after he understands what is offered up to God, consider or exercise his Judgment about it, to know whether it be proper or  
 not;

not; and when he is satisfied of That, there remaineth yet, that the Heart or Affections be proportionably moved, or elated, (in which, not a Little of the Spirit of true Devotion consisteth,) and all this is a great deal of Work incumbent upon the Mind at once, and some of it is likely to be but lamely and imperfectly performed; and by that time a Man has attended, consider'd of the Matter, and Words of a Petition; by that time a Man has joined, and endeavoured to raise his Soul to the Purpose of it, What is become of the Speaker? surely he is gone off into other Matter, other Petitions, leaves the Hearer, the *Attender*, the Considerer behind; much of this Devotion must be lost, or much of it very imperfectly performed, and great Distraction and Interruption must it introduce, unless Men have Minds different from others, Understandings of so strange a Quickness and Capacity as to be able to exert several Acts at once, and much better too, than if taken up with fewer. This hath been often urged to the Advantage of Forms, and it is not easy to give a satisfactory Answer to it. But because this Gentleman seemeth much concerned about Unattention, and Distraction in Prayer, lamenteth this Infirmary in human Nature, and would prevent it, we will join with him in so pious and useful a Design, and hope that

Sermon  
IV.

Sermon that he will not refuse our Assistance : And,

IV.

What thinks he *first*, if the Devotion of the Church, instead of being contained in one *long Prayer*, were divided into many *short Collects* ? Would not this relieve Attention ? Would not, herein, this Infirmary of human Nature be consulted, and assisted ? Our Lord hath made a Prayer, but is it long ? Upon this Model, and upon this View, the ancient Christian Church ordered publick Worship, or composed *Liturgies* ; and out of Deference to our Lord's Example, and the Sentiments, and Practice of the ancient Churches, ours retains it, and, upon Experience, I doubt not but this proves as good a Means of *Attention* as the extempore Way. But this will not pass.

I propose, therefore, *another* Thing to prevent *Distraction*, to assist *Attention* in Prayer ; and think it is what this Author must approve of, even better than That of praying extempore. The Ground of this Distraction and Wandring, of foreign Thoughts in Prayer, our Saviour assigns us ; and, What is That ? That Men pray by a *Form* ? Where read we any such Thing ? — But we read another Thing much to the Purpose, and that is, *out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts*, &c. and again, *where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also* : So that the Root of this Evil (saving in the Case of a diseased Imagination)



tion) is the Corruption of our Hearts, the Sermon inordinate Passions and Lusts that infest and IV.  aff them. We doat upon the World too in-

ordinately, and this engages all our Thoughts, as well as Endeavours about it; from *this*, and other Lusts, spring foreign worldly Thoughts even in Prayer. For a Man will, must think of that which he eagerly, passionately loves. How can a Man think of God, and heavenly Things, or lift his Desires towards *them*, who hath made *this* World his End? This were Nonsense, and a Contradiction: So that the Cause of the Distemper being discovered, the Remedy and Cure is more easily discerned. And what is that? *extempore Prayer*? No surely; but rather what the Gospel prescribes, to endeavour to purge out of our Hearts those unruly exorbitant Lusts, to cleanse this Spring and Fountain, to raise in it the Love of God, and of divine and heavenly Things. Then Attention in a Prayer by a *Form* would become easy, and without it impossible, even in the *extempore* Way. And this we teach as a better Expedient, as more Divine, Theological, we hope, than Novelty of Expression, against Wandring and Distraction in Devotion.

Thus I have briefly answered some of the most considerable Objections that this learned Dissenter produces against *Forms* of Prayer in *general*, and, I hope, I have done it in the Spirit

Sermon Spirit of Charity, in a Way that can give  
 IV. no Offence to any wise and good *Dissenter*,  
 much less to any such *Church-man*. And it  
 were indeed truly hard, and we should have  
 just Cause to complain, if every Man were  
 tolerated to speak any Thing against the  
 Church, and we not tolerated to say any  
 Thing for it. But to leave Dissenters, and  
 conclude with a Word of Advice to our  
 selves, which this Discourse naturally sug-  
 gesteth;

And that is, If Forms are most agreeable  
 to right Reason, best secure the publick  
 Worship, are warranted by the primitive  
 Practice, and the Word of God; this lays  
 us all, both Pastors and People, under the  
 strictest Obligations to adhere to them, to  
 demonstrate this our Opinion by our Pra-  
 ctice, as well as Profession. As for us Pa-  
 stors, who lead the People in these and other  
 Cases; Is it our Opinion that Forms are  
 best? Our being Presbyters of this Church  
 implys it. For *in*, and *for* every Thing,  
 have we Forms. What Authority have we  
 for the free and *extempore* Way? What *Ru-  
 bricks*, what *Canons* allow it? From whence  
 derive we this Authority, or who gave it to  
 us? and yet I may venture to say, without  
 Offence (to any *here* I am sure) that, now  
 and then, we have a little digressed, a little  
 aimed at the contrary, a little acted after

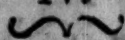
Tea-

Teachers of other Congregations; I hope, Sermon  
and believe, from charitable Motives, to se-  
cure the good Opinion of those who delight-  
ed in such Performances: The Intent, per-  
haps, was good; but, What was the Effect?  
Did it more promote the Union of the  
Church? Did it gain Profelytes? Did it make  
fewer Dissenters in Parishes where it was  
practised? or, Did it gain Dissenters to the  
Church? I doubt all this exceedingly. I am  
sure, in the Nature of the Thing, it is like-  
ly to work the other Way: For it is a tacit  
Approbation of extempore Prayers, teaches  
People to disregard the Prayers of the Church  
compared to *them*, and so naturally leads in-  
to an Opinion of the Rectitude, and Spiritu-  
ality of the Devotion in separate Congre-  
gations. And if, at last, our Members are  
infected, drop off under this Inveiglement,  
Who can blame them? Who have infected  
them? Who have disposed them to condemn  
our Prayers? Is it not our selves? I must  
speak my Opinion, and am ready to sub-  
mit to better Judgments, this Practice ten-  
deth to lead Men out of the Church, instead  
of bringing them into it. For if our ex-  
tempore Prayers, if such Gifts in Pastors be  
the main Inducements to Men to frequent  
our Church, believe it, they will not fre-  
quent it long; we are not only rival'd, but  
VOL. I. K out-



Sermon

IV.



out-done by others herein, we shall never be *Masters*, but poor dull *Imitators* in this Faculty; have no Freedom, no Enlargement, as long as we are under a true Sense of the divine Majesty, the Government of right Reason, and sacred Scripture: We may do something, but arrive to no Perfection; and fanciful and weak Men will always admire others better than us; and so our Attempts will only demonstrate our Approbation of that which we have not in our Church, or cannot attain to, at least, to that Degree, as more ignorant and bold Adventurers may; so, upon our own Principle, they are gone.

The Excellency of Forms should lay upon our People the same Obligation; should engage them to reverence, to prefer them to any other Way; to esteem our Church not the worse, but the better a great deal for them. Is the Devotion the worse, because it is written; because it is known to you? Because you are before-hand acquainted with what you pray God for, and in what Words? When you know all these Things before you enter the Church of God, what have you to do, but to prepare, dispose your Minds suitably to the Things you pray for; to raise in your selves suitable Apprehen-

prehenſions of *Them*, of the divine Ma-  
 jeſty, of your own Wants, of your Sins? Sermon  
IV.  
 What have you to do, but to bring devout  
 Affections with you, agreeable to the Words  
 you addreſs the divine Maſteſty in, or  
 praiſe him by? Your Minds being thus  
 turned to the Devotion, the Prayers will ne-  
 ver appear dull, or formal to you; you will  
 never want Novelty, Variety of Expres-  
 ſion to gain your Attention, which is ra-  
 ther a preſent Amuſement of the Fancy,  
 than true Devotion. The other is grave,  
 wiſe, rational, flows from the Heart, from  
 the Affections; has its Foundation in your  
 own Souls (as all true Devotion ought  
 to have) and not in Novelty of Words; in  
 due Apprehenſions of the divine Maſteſty,  
 in Love to him, Fear of him. This, I  
 ſay, is true Devotion: This will render  
 you Attentive much better than the Pre-  
 ſence of Variety of Expresſion, which acts  
 mechanically upon the Soul, and may be  
 deſtitute of any true Senſe of God, and  
 Religion. Let us, therefore, endeavour to  
 promote thoſe Affections, to have Minds  
 ſuitable to our Prayers, and then we ſhall  
 diſcern truly, the Excellency of them, have  
 no other Concern but Pity and Compaſſion  
 for ſuch as deſpiſe and expoſe them. This  
 brings Honour to our Church, ſhews it in

# 137 Of the Excellency of the Church, &c.

Sermon added Light to others, as well as to our  
 IV. selves, if it convinces not *them*, of the Ex-  
 cellency of our Church, yet it draws down  
 the divine Blessing on it, so that if it can  
 do *them* no Good, its Enemies shall be unca-  
 pable of doing it any Harm.



SERMON



# SERMON V.

## OF BAPTISM.

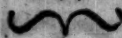
R. O. M. VI. 42

*Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death.*

THE Apostle before having ve-Sermon  
 ry largely demonstrated our V.  
 T Justification by the free  
 Grace of G O D, in and  
 through the Death and Me-  
 rits of his only beloved Son; here obviateth  
 an Inference which corrupt Men might be  
 likely to draw from such a Doctrine, both  
 to the Dishonour of God and of the christian  
 Religion: And that is, that from hence a  
 Life of Holiness and Piety might seem un-

Sermon necessary, because, in the Virtue of It, no

V.



Man is justified or acquitted before God; the Inconsequence and Absurdity of which Conclusion the Apostle very clearly evinceth from diverse Heads of Argument, drawn from the very Nature of the christian Revelation. And first from *Baptism*, the Ordinance by which Men are initiated into this Religion, and made Members of the christian Church: By this, if Men rightly understood it, they would find quite the contrary, instead of Looseness, the greatest Strictness and Purity of Life suggested; and this he proves by opening to us the spiritual Meaning and Intent of Baptism, which, I think, may be ranged and explained under these four Particulars.

*First, Baptism implies the Pardon and Forgiveness of all our Sins past.*

*Secondly, it implies, and carries with it, a clear Idea of our Death to Sin for the future.*

*Thirdly, under it is typified the Renovation of our Minds, or a new and spiritual Life.*

*Fourthly, it is a Pledge and Earnest of the Resurrection, and Glorification of our Bodies at the last Day.*

When

When I affirm that Baptism has these great and glorious Effects, I would be understood to mean, when it is duly administered according to the Institution of Christ, and upon Persons fitly qualified, both which being besides my present Purpose, I shall presuppose both these Things in my ensuing Discourse.

*First, Baptism implies the Pardon and Forgiveness of all our Sins past.* St. Paul here saith of our Saviour, that, *in that he died, he died unto Sin once*, not for his own Sins, but the Sins of the World: And again, that we are *baptized into his Death*, have the Merit of his Death applied to us, upon which, Forgiveness of Sin is founded. Indeed, the Apostle useth this Consideration *here* to a Purpose somewhat different, but it is altogether as true in the Sense in which I urge it: For if Baptism implies a Death to Sin for the future, which is the Point the Apostle has more especially in View, it must imply as certainly the Pardon of Sins past, this being necessary to the former, what makes it *possible* and *useful*; for if the *Power* of Sin be broken by the Grace of Baptism, much more is the *Guilt* of it removed. But we have no need thus to argue, when the Thing is directly asserted in so many Places of the *New Testament*. So, in that first powerful



Sermon Discourse of St. Peter, which raised in his

III. Hearers that deep Compunction, and put  
 them on so earnest an Enquiry, as Men and  
 Brethren what shall we do? The Apostle's  
 Answer to them, is, *Repent, and be baptized  
 every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ,  
 for the Remission of Sins.* Men could not be  
 easily greater Sinners than *these* were, for it  
 seems they were of the Number of our  
 Lord's Persecutors and Crucifiers; but yet  
 this should not startle nor discourage them,  
 there was Merit and Efficacy enough in that  
 very Blood they had shed, to atone for so  
 great a Guilt, and it should be applied upon  
 the Conditions before expressed, not only  
 for the Murderers of others, but even of  
 himself, the Mercy and Greatness of which,  
 one can never sufficiently admire and extol.

The very Design and Intent of this Sa-  
 crament clearly represents Forgiveness of  
 Sins: For as our Bodies are washed and  
 cleansed by the Element of Water, so are our  
 Souls by the Blood of Christ from all the  
 Stains and Pollutions of Sin; and one is the  
 Emblem or Figure of the other. And this  
 is the true Meaning of a Sacrament; God  
 Almighty engages to do *inwardly*, what is  
*outwardly* represented to our Senses, and we  
 may be certain what the Washing of Water  
 does upon our Bodies, must infallibly be  
 done upon our Souls; the Effect is great  
 and

and certain, although inward and spiritual, and because we cannot see what God engages to do, and what is done, he hath been pleased to shew and instruct us what is done in an outward and visible Sign, and the Agency and the Effect of another Principle is signed by the Washing of Water, or the hidden and invisible Thing by the Outward and Visible.

And so sure a Doctrine was this, that Baptism conferred Forgiveness of Sins past, and so certainly and universally was it entertained in early Times, that weak and licentious Men drew from it a very wrong Conclusion and Practice, frequently delayed their Baptism, as Men do now their Repentance, till their Death-bed, that they might be sure of full Pardon and Forgiveness at their Departure; which was indeed a gross Error and Abuse, against which the Pastors of the Church employ'd their Labour and Zeal; but it abundantly shews what Reception this Doctrine found, which was so extravagantly built and depended on. I pass on to

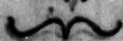
The Second Thing: *Baptism implies and carries with it, a clear Idea of our Death to Sin for the future.* This is fully and clearly shewn by the Apostle in this Chapter, as in Verse 2. *How shall we who are dead to Sin, live*

Sermon *live any longer therein?* This Death to Sin is  
 V. a main Part of the Signification of Baptism,  
 and this the Apostle proveth and illustrateth by calling Converts to Remembrance what is done in this Ordinance. First, they were baptised into the Death of *Christ*, and therefore were not only dead, but, as in the Text, were *buried with him* too: And again, *Verse 5. If we have been planted together in the Likeness of his Death*: There is a peculiar Emphasis and Propriety in the Apostle's Words here; for Baptism is the initiatory Rite that admits Men into the Privileges of this Religion, and therefore it is very significantly express'd by being *planted*, and if this is done well, or in Conformity to his Death, we shall follow, and resemble him farther in other *Likenesses* to him, in the highest Instances of Exaltation and Glory. But what is this Death that we undergo in Baptism? The Apostle shews it is a Death to Sin, *Knowing this*, says he of Baptism, *that our old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin, for he that is dead is freed from Sin*; for we are accounted to have sustained a certain Death in Baptism: But you will say, How so? How doth Baptism represent or typify this Death to Sin? Very clearly; if we recollect the ancient Method of Baptizing, to  
 which



which the Apostle here alludeth, and buildeth his Argument upon: Now this was, as I suppose none are ignorant of, by Immersion, in which, by our Descent into the Water, was signified our Death, that is, the Death of our old Man, as the Apostle terms it; the Death of Concupiscence, and all other worldly Inclinations and Lusts; for all these arise from the Body and Senses, and upon the Death of the Body are all at an End; have no farther Influence or Effect; all Objects of Sense, whether the Pleasures, Riches, or Glories of the World have no Operation, kindle no Desires in the Dead; and in this Sense the baptised Man is to conceive himself carnally dead, and to endeavour to resemble the Dead as much as possible, in an Insensibility of all the unlawful Desires and Delights; all the Honours and Glories, and gay and tempting Appearances that the World displays on him. These irregular and fleshly Inclinations which are born with us, and improv'd by Custom, and which are our old and natural State, are supposed to be put off or dead in Baptism; so far dead, I mean, as this corruptible State will admit of: They are as good as dead, in the merciful and gracious Construction of the Gospel; that is, their Power is broken, and we are no longer under their Dominion, Slaves to them,

Sermon as the Apostle abundantly sheweth in the  
 V. latter Part of this Chapter.



And this not only doth the Nature of this Ordinance imply, but is what we solemnly promise and engage to do, according to the Example of the primitive Church; our Church requireth, in order to Baptism, an open and resolute *Renunciation of the Devil and all his Works; the vain Pomp and Glory of the World, with, all covetous Desires of the same, and the carnal Desires of the Flesh, so that we will not follow nor be led by them.* The Baptized most solemnly and devoutly engage herein, That they will no longer serve, or adhere to the great apostate Angel, who revolted first, and withdrew his Allegiance and Dependance from the sovereign Lord of the Universe, the Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth, and who, seduced many of the heavenly Inhabitants into the same impious Rebellion against God, and so all fell together from their high Estates of Bliss and Glory, and being excluded Heaven, restless in Evil, they next attempted this World; inveagled our first Parents into the same Revolt, and, as a Consequence of this, subjected human Race to Corruption, Misery, and Death; drew down a Curse on this lower World, and very much defaced the beautiful and lovely Order of it; in fine, established a Kingdom here, in Opposition

to that of God's, overspread the Earth with Idolatry and false Worship, and the most monstrous and abominable Practices. This

V

Enemy of God and all Goodness, our grand Deceiver and Tempter, we renounce in Baptism, with all his wicked Adherents, which was done in the ancient Christian Church in Words and Circumstances full of the utmost Indignation and Defiance, which it is out of my Way *here* to acquaint you with. But every baptised Man in our Church does the same Thing, sedately and solemnly, either by himself, or Surety; upon which Terms only he could be baptized, and is under the same Obligation to renounce and forsake the Devil and his Kingdom, to be no Abettor of that grand and original Apostacy, or Associate in it; as every Man may well do, indeed, considering where he is, under what Head and Government, and to what it must at last bring him. The Baptised addeth to this a Renunciation of the Devil, *and all his Works* too, which comprehendeth all Kinds of Wickedness and Vice; he being the Author and Original of all this, by which he is served; and in which his Kingdom consisteth, is founded and upheld; and we never truly renounce him without renouncing and departing from his Works; for he inspires and acts us, while we sin; we are under his

Banner



Sermon Banner and Dominion, are carrying on his  
 V. Work and Ends, or are his Children or  
 ~~~~~ Servants; our Renouncing the Devil without this, partaketh of the same Hipocrisy, as an outward Profession of our Allegiance to our lawful Prince, while we join in all Acts of Treachery and Rebellion against him.

The Works we renounce in Baptism are yet more particularly exemplify'd and express'd; they are called *the vain Poms and Glories of the World*, which had, anciently, a Signification somewhat peculiar: They regarded, especially, all Theatrical Shews and Performances, in which the Heathens were exceedingly delighted, and which were frequently exhibited by great Men amongst them, for the Entertainment and Gratification of the People; generally directed to the Honour of some of their Gods, in which, Idolatry, and all Sorts of Wickedness and Licentiousness, were taught and encouraged; of these vain Shews or Sights, there were divers Kinds, with which I shall not trouble you; only I shall observe, From nothing, were the Baptised, by the Fathers of the Christian Church, more strictly forbidden, than from those lewd Sights and Spectacles, which were, in their Opinion, the grand Supports of the Devil's Kingdom: And sure so they were; if the Devil's Kingdom consist-

consisted in Vice, for this was recommended Sermon
and insinuated there in the most artful and V.
engaging Ways.

Idolatry, in this Sense, is now extinguish-
ed in Christian Countries; *Jupiter*, and *Ve-
nus*, and *Diana*, and the Rest of their Dei-
ties, now find no Credit in the Minds of
Men; that Imposture is at an End, and un-
der that Style and Pretence can Wickedness
be supported or Men corrupted no longer.
But are there no other Ways of corrupting
or debauching of Mens Minds? Can there
be no Shews, no Representations, no Thea-
trical Performances that may prove an In-
centive to Vice, but such as were directed
to the Honour of false Gods? If Vice and
Immorality, Prophaneness and Lewdness,
be as much, as artfully recommended and
acted, in Compositions of Wit, and repre-
sented on what we call Christian Theatres,
the Kingdom of the Devil will be no Loser
by discarding of his Idols; and the bapti-
fied Person should be as much afraid of these
Plays, and esteem the Frequenting them as
contrary to his Christian Obligations and
Vows, as if they were downright Heathen
Spectacles; because Vice is the Essence of
the Devil's Kingdom, and is what the good
Christian hath renounced in his Baptism, as
will appear in these last Words, wherein the
Baptised addeth, *with all covetous Desires of*
the

Sermon the same, and the carnal Desires of the Flesh;

V. the Importance of which Words are well understood; we profess herein to part with every Thing that is vitious, without Reserve; yea, not only with all vitious Actions, but with all vitious and irregular Desires or Inclinations, and because if we cannot, through the original Corruption of our Nature, quite eradicate or extinguish them, yet we profess that we will not approve of them, or be led, or acted in the Pursuit of them, and this is the *second* Thing, Baptism, in its own Nature, implies a *Death to Sin*, and is further made our own solemn and devout Engagement upon our Receiving it.

Thirdly, Under Baptism is typified the *Renovation* of our Minds, or a *new and spiritual Life*. This is imply'd by our Ascent out of the Water, our *Arising* to a Newness of Life, or as *St. Paul* here expresses it, *Our living unto God; our yielding our selves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto God*; and so it was anciently understood, the Sign of a Covenant between God and Man, as Circumcision was, wherein both the Gifts of God and Duties of Man were implied; that he should lead a new Life, for which he should have sufficient Powers,

Powers and Abilities; and, indeed, no Doctrine is more largely and expressly inculcated in sacred Scripture than this, that in Baptism the divine Spirit is communicated, whereby the Heart and the Mind are affected and changed, a new Life and Strength confer'd, different from and beyond what is naturally bestow'd, and which shews it self very powerfully, unless hinder'd by our own Faults, in suitable Acts and Fruits. And therefore, in Baptism, we are said to undergo a second and new Birth, to be *born again of the Spirit*. And hence St. Peter, in the forementioned Text to the *Jews*, tells them, that not only upon being baptised, should they receive Remission of Sins, but likewise the Gift of the Holy Ghost: And without this, doubtless, small would be the Effects or Benefits of Baptism, even the Forgiveness of Sins for the present, would serve us in little Stead, if immediately after we are guilty of as great or greater, as unavoidably we should be, if left to our natural State. For, what That produces our former Conversations shew, and certainly without a higher and diviner Principle afforded us, and remaining with us, nothing better or higher would ever be produced; for the same Nature, and the same Principles could not but have the same Effects. We therefore receive a higher Principle in Baptism, that is,

Sermon

V.

the Author of a heavenly, spiritual, and divine Life; and so the Scripture testifies, and imputes the mighty Change made upon our Minds, the Efficacy, and Force, and Power, and all that a Christian is Master of, all the Good he does, to this Spirit; which Spirit, according to the Oeconomy of God set forth in the *New Testament*, he receives in Baptism. There is Improvement made afterwards, but the Work is begun here. Thus, How often do we read That Spirit was poured forth upon Men's being baptised in the Name of our Saviour? But to omit these Things, St. Paul gives us a sad, but true Picture of the natural State, *For we our selves were also sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful and bating one another.* But the Blessing was, they were become otherwise now, but by what Means? He tells us *they were saved by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost; by the inward and spiritual Efficacy that attended Baptism.* So again; minding some of the *Corinthians* how vicious they had been formerly, even *Thieves, Covetous, and Drunkards, and Revilers, and Extortioners,* he addeth to their Commendation and Comfort; *but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c.* such a wonderful Power attended Baptism in former Times, and such an Alteration

tion did it make in Mens Minds and Actions. Sermon.
Hence, in the Writings of the primitive V.
Fathers, the Baptised were peculiarly stiled *The Enlighten'd*, and so *φωτισμένοι* is to be interpreted in most Places, and Illumination was but another Name for Baptism, because of the mighty Operation it had upon the Soul, it so purged, reformed, clarified, and enlighten'd it. I pass on to

The Fourth and Last Thing, To shew, That Baptism is a Pledge or Earnest of the Resurrection, and Glorification of our Bodies at the last Day. This too, is abundantly taught us in the Word of God. *If ye are risen with Christ*, saith St. Paul: How are we risen? his Meaning is, if we are spiritually risen, if we are raised from the Death of Sin, as every baptised Man may; if he will himself, he hath, or may have Power to do it; in that there is a Resurrection already, the better Part of our selves, our Souls, are already raised by the divine Spirit; and this is a sure Pledge, a sure Demonstration of the Resurrection of our Bodies likewise; for we shall not be raised by Halves, and the same divine Power which hath raised, in this Life, our Souls from spiritual Bondage, Corruption, and Death, can and will equally raise our Bodies from Corruption and the Grave; both are the Effects of the same Omnipotency;

Sermon tency; and it is equally difficult to raise the
 V. Soul from the Death that it is subject to,
 the Death of Sin, as to raise the Body from
 its proper Death and Corruption. But the
 former is already done on the Soul of every
 true Christian, and shall not the Latter be
 performed too? It can never be doubted of
 by such a Man, by one who hath obtained
 and improved the baptismal Spirit, and is
 sensible of the Effects of it on his Soul, as
 he must be if he has it; I say, can such a
 One doubt of the Change of his Body at the
 last Day, when he feels already the Change
 of his Soul here? It were very strange if he
 should, when he hath not only the common
 Proofs of Christianity for it, but even the
 Testimony and Experience of inward Sense,
 or, as the Scripture expresses it, hath a
Pledge and Earnest of it in what is done al-
 ready upon him, in the Change, Renova-
 tion, or Resurrection of his Mind. It is a
 great and lively Expression, and goeth to
 the very Depth of Christianity, in which
 St. Paul undervalueth and despiseth all Pri-
 vileges and Advantages compared with one,
 which was, *That he might know him, and the*
Power of his Resurrection. Infinite Power is
 there in the Resurrection of our Saviour,
 and good Christians have not a bare specu-
 lative Knowledge of it, but the Effects of it
 are displayed on their Minds, in quicken-
 ing

ing and raising them into a new and a spiritual Life, which will not end here, but be compleated in due Time, in the Resurrection and Glorification of their Bodies; the Work is already begun, the Foundation of all laid in this spiritual Resurrection of our Minds. So the Apostle argueth in the 8th Chapter of this Epistle, *But if the Spirit of him which raised up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you.* The Matter of all lieth in this, If we are possess'd of this Spirit here, then *he that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken our mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in us;* and we are farther assured of this, in that by our Union to this Spirit we become Sons of God; so the Apostle again argueth, *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God:* and this makes us *Heirs, and Joint-heirs with Christ,* and therefore, we can never fail of the Resurrection of our Bodies, according to the Example of our Saviour who was declared, saith the same Apostle, *the Son of God with Power, by his Resurrection from the Dead;* and our Relation to God, as Sons, will be demonstrated the same Way, if in this Life it be clear'd and manifested by the Renovation of our Minds: But more expressly in 2 Cor. v. 5. where the Apostle, treating of this very Point, resolveth the great Assurance they had of the Immortality of their

to

L 3

Souls,

Sermon Souls, and Resurrection of their Bodies, into this Earnest of the Spirit: His Words are, *Now he that hath wrought for us the Self-same Thing is God, who hath given us the Earnest of his Spirit.* I might multiply Texts to this Purpose, but it is needless to any Man who reads the Scripture, and considers the Analogy and Meaning of it, and makes his Animadversions thereon with an unprejudiced and sincere Mind.

I shall therefore only desire your Patience while I draw an Inference or two, by Way of Application, and then conclude.

And, from what has been said, we may learn,

1. The Unreasonableness and Prejudice of Men who undervalue Baptism, who slight and despise it, and will not receive it. What can such a Practice import, but that they will not admit of the Institution of God, in which Remission of Sins, a Mortification of Sin, the Spirit of God, a new Life is promised and bestowed. One would think, Mens own Interest should sufficiently work upon and engage them; for, Is it a small and indifferent Matter to Men to have their Sins pardoned and mortified, the Grace and the holy Spirit of God conferred on them? Certainly these Things are of the greatest and last Consequence; are the Scope and Aim

of the Christian Religion, to which all its Promises of future Happiness are made; and if Men will not comply with the Terms which God hath commanded, and on which he graciously bestows these great Things, what can this import, but their little Regard and Esteem of the Things themselves that Pardon and Mortification of Sin, a new Life of Righteousness, everlasting Happiness, are Matters about which they are not greatly concerned or troubled? For, sure, if Men greatly wanted or desired these Things, without foolish Scruples or Disputes, they would use the Means that all holy Men ever did, the Means so clearly appointed by God of obtaining them.

That wicked Men should shew this Scorn of Baptism; Men, who, as they have no Sense of Religion, so profess none: I say, That Men, openly prophane, should neglect or despise Baptism, is not so wonderful; because, such are Unbelievers, and despise the Things implied by it, and promised in it: But, That Men, who make the greatest Pretensions to Religion and Holiness; that would pass themselves off as the most spiritual and enlighten'd Men; they who profess, in all Things, to be guided by the *Spirit*; Would one expect that *They* should oppose, and, with great Contempt, cast off the Means and Ways, which the Author of the Spirit hath insti-

Sermon tuted and commanded of bestowing it? Sure,

V.

a sad and presumptuous Thing it is, that Men will have the Spirit in Ways different from what God hath appointed, in direct Contradiction to his Commands. Is there not Danger, in such a Practice, that Men be deluded, and instead of the Divine, receive another Kind of a Spirit, when they depart from the Means that God hath established and directed all Men to, in order to receive it? Whether different Ways, of Mens own devising, may not derive into them (if any) a Spirit different from the Divine, is what, I am certain, a wise and good Man would very much consider, yea greatly fear and dread.

But *this* that we encourage, they say, is *Water-Baptism*, and what great Effect can a little *Water* have? Sure, such Expressions favour of very gross Prejudice, or Impiety. In Charity, I hope, and am willing to believe, they flow from the Former. But briefly to return an Answer to these Men; although there be Water, yet, Is that all? Is there nothing else promised and joined to it? Is nothing else signified and bestowed? How often, in the *New Testament*, and throughout the Writings of the Fathers, hath God attested this Command and Ordinance of his, by miraculously bestowing his Spirit by it? And because the Thing is easy that is required on our Part, and naturally produ-

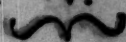
ces

ces no extraordinary Effects, must it therefore, when ordain'd, be condemn'd as insignificant? If Men would not fancy themselves wiser than God, if they would submit to and acquiesce in what he enjoins, all would be well; for here he instituteth a Means of conveying his Grace, and pardoning our Sins, and many other inestimable Benefits; Things, we must own, we greatly want, but we will not practise them, because, in themselves, they are weak and indifferent Ceremonies: Which is like the Reasoning and Wrath of *Naaman the Syrian*, upon the Prophet's bidding him wash seven Times in *Jordan*, in order to cure his inveterate Leprosy: For, What says he to this? *Are not Abana and Pharpar Rivers in Damascus better than all the Waters of Israel?* as much as to say, What idle Advice is here? What Vertue is there in the Water of *Jordan*, more than in others of great Reputation and Fame in our own Country? Looking no farther, you see, than the meer natural Efficacy of the Means: But a better Sense had his Servants of the Direction of the Prophet, and which I wish these Men would understand and consider, *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great Thing, would'st thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash and be clean? And when God Almighty commands us to*
 believe,

Sermon believe, and be baptised, in order to receive
 V. Remission and Mortification of our Sins,
 and the Gift of the Holy Ghost, should we
 slight and reject it, because of the Easiness
 of the Means, and their natural Incapacity
 to produce any great Effects? Know, vain
 Man, it is not to the Water that we impute
 this great Efficacy, but to another and higher
 Principle which God hath promised, and in
 innumerable Instances hath shewn, for which
 we both praise him, and revere his Institu-
 tion, that it hath and doth operate by it.

If any of you, therefore, have been so
 unhappy and misled, either by your own,
 or Parents Prejudices, as never to have been
 baptised; retrieve this great Misfortune and
 Error, as you would be sure to have your
 Sins forgiven, the Power of your Lusts bro-
 ken, the divine Spirit communicated to you.
 In a Word, as you would be Members of
 our Saviour's Body and Church here, Chil-
 dren and Heirs of God here; and be Sons of
 the Resurrection, and admitted into his
 glorious Kingdom hereafter: For, the re-
 gular Way of your arriving to this glorious
 End is by Baptism; this is not a Method of
 our own devising, but of God's; and this you
 would see evidently, if you took his Word
 for your Rule, if you read That impartial-
 ly, and hearken'd not to the vain and in-
 coherent Talk of others, the idle Pretences

to the Spirit, in Opposition to the real Di-
rections of the Spirit in the sacred Scri-
tures.

Sermon
V.


And this brings me to the 2d Inference that this Discourse naturally suggesteth, viz. The Obligations we should conceive our selves under, and the Preparations which we should make, in order to receive Baptism. You will easily perceive this is directed to adult Persons, to such as have not been baptised until they are come to Years of Discretion; for Infant-Baptism is out of my Way now to vindicate: And sure, such should understand, and be well aware of what they do here, *That they renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of the World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh,* and the like, as you before heard, and that they believe in God and our Saviour, &c. as they profess openly in our Creeds. And do they not in reality, and with the purest Intention, and the utmost Resolution, aspire after these Things? Are they not convinced of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and the Doctrines it includes? What? and yet openly profess these Things before God, and the Church of God, and innumerable Angels of God, according to the Opinion of the ancient Fathers: What horrid Prevarication and Mockery, is this? What spiritual

Sermon tual Effects can such a Baptism derive, which
V. is obtain'd by such abominable Dissimula-
 ~~~~~ tion and Lyes?

Great, therefore, were the Endeavours both of the Pastors of the Church, and such as offer'd themselves to be baptised, in order to fit and qualify themselves for it; long were they instructed in the Knowledge of the Religion they were about to take on them the Profession of; good Proofs did they give of their real unfeigned Belief of it, as well as of the Sincerity of their Repentance, and Resolution to be acted agreeably to its Rules and Precepts; and, at last, before they were admitted to it, a Course of Prayers and Fasting was enjoined, and performed by themselves, and the Church of God, to prepare the Way and fit them for it. And this was like Men who acted in Sincerity, and was the Way to make this Ordinance useful to them, and no Wonder it had such powerful Effects, when they took such Pains to qualify themselves for it.

The divine Effect of any Ordinance of God is suspended and defeated upon our Want of Qualifications; something is to be done on our Part, in order to obtain so great Gifts of God: And here, in order to receive the spiritual Effects of Baptism, in general, Repentance and Faith are required; and if these be wanting in Men, they do but de-  
 ~~~~~ ceive


ceive themselves, expose Baptism, dishonour the Church, into which they were received: And this is

Sermon

VI

The 3d and last Inference I would draw from this Discourse; the Obligation which lies upon us all who have been baptised, and that whether in our Infancy, or afterwards. What this Ordinance implies, what Gifts it confers, what we expressly engage and promise to do in it, I have said enough of, I hope, to suggest to us the Duty and Obligation it lays us all under. It is true, indeed, the greatest Part of us were baptized in our Infancy, according to the Orders of our Church, in which Particular she stands justified by Scripture, and the primitive Practice, as hath been abundantly shewn by others; but yet, doth not this evacuate our Obligations we stand bound to, by what others did for us then, unless we have renounced that Act and Stipulation since, which is a Thing I presume we have never done, neither are willing to be thought to have done. The Obligation therefore, remains in its full Force upon us, and especially when we publickly have owned and renewed it, made it our own Act, taken it upon our selves, as most of us have done in our Confirmation; upon which Terms we are admitted to the Sacrament, in which, again,

Sermon again, in effect, the same open Profession of
 V. Faith, the same Vows and Resolutions of a
 good and holy Life, are renewed: So that,
 under what strong Ties and Obligations do
 we all lie, of being what we have so often
 publickly declared, and bound our selves to
 be? Should a Man thus openly and publick-
 ly, before so many Witnesses, bind himself
 to perform any Act of Justice or Charity
 to another, and prove downright insensible
 of it, shift it off and prevaricate in the Dis-
 charge of it; What a Dishonour would it
 cast upon him, and what a Monster would
 he be reputed? And are Vows of no Force
 and Obligation when made to God, in the
 most awful and solemn Manner, and before
 the Church of God? Can we more easily
 and honourably falsify with God than with
 Man? Or were these Vows before God only
 made in Jest? This, indeed, considering how
 they are often performed, one might justly
 fear. Let me intreat you, be at so much,
 or rather so little Pains, as to recollect and
 take a short and serious View of the express
 Engagements every Man taketh on him in
 Baptism; compare the Words of this so-
 lemn Covenant, as I will not stick to call
 it, with the common Pursuits and Practices
 of such as have received it; that is, com-
 pare Atheism, and Unbelief of God, and
 all Manner of absurd and ungodly Opinions
 with

with what is there protested to be believed in our Creeds: Compare Lewdness, Fornication, Drunkenness, the utmost worldly Pursuits, with what is there promised, and engaged to be performed, and you will see a marvellous, shameful Inconsistency: Sure enough to raise Shame in us, if we have any such Thing, if in this Manner we have acquitted our Obligations, is there no Occasion of Reflection, and Remembrances of this Kind? I wish heartily there were not, and that this belong'd to none.

Great, you see, are the Gifts confer'd in Baptism, Pardon of our Sins, Mortification of our Lusts, the Assistance of the Spirit, as the Pledge and Earnest of future Life and Resurrection: And while we believe these Things, we ought to believe other Things too, equally true and important; among the Rest, that we may crucify afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open Shame, which will cast us into a very dangerous Estate: We may renounce our Religion, and then what will our Baptism avail? And what is a Life directly contrary to our Engagements, but a tacit Renunciation of it? For, Works as effectually deny our Saviour as Words: We are taught, That the Spirit is confer'd in Baptism; but then we are taught too, that this Spirit may be grieved, quenched, or drove from us; and then, where is
the

Sermon
V.
~

Sermon the Earnest or Pledge of Immortality, and

V. a blessed and glorious Resurrection? For

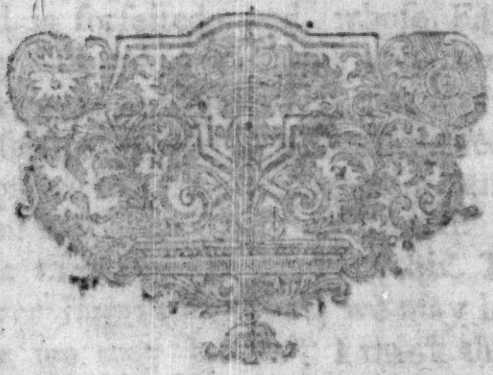
 Pledges or Earnests of great and future Things to be performed by another, imply, that they are carefully preserved and kept, so that they can be produced by us in Token and Evidence of our Agreement and Covenant; and lay an Obligation upon us of performing the Whole; therefore we are said to be *sealed by this Spirit, sealed to the Day of Redemption*: But then this Seal or Impression must be preserved; or else it proves nothing, or gives us no Right to the Matter depending on it. If this Pledge be cast away or lost; if this Seal be obliterated or cancelled, it is all one as if we never received it; we are in the same Condition, or worse, as Men that never were baptised, or never had the Spirit, and consequently can lay no Claim to nothing in the Vertue of it; all is forfeited; and, whose Fault? Certainly our own. For we have thrown away the great Security and Pledge of all, and consequently are to be interpreted to have departed from our Engagement, and to depend on and expect nothing from it.

Let us therefore be aware of this, That whatsoever Baptism confers, we may lose; and how we may lose it; I think this is plain; and is plainly, by losing the Pledge or Seal. The Way, therefore, is to keep and improve

improve the Grace it bestows, *to make our Sermon Calling and Election sure.* This is a good Way too of bringing Honour and Reputation to this Ordinance, when the Grace and Spirit it conveys is demonstrated to all, by the Fruits it produces in our Lives, when they see our natural State is quitted, when no longer its Works appear in us, a Catalogue of which the Apostle gives us; on the contrary, they observe the Fruits of the Spirit appear in *Love, Joy, Peace, Gentleness,* and such like Graces. This rescues Baptism from that Slight and Contempt which is cast upon it; justifies and recommends it, as it did anciently; brings the greatest Honour and Glory to our Church, which insists on it, and clears up our Title to everlasting Peace and Happiness hereafter.



improve the Grace it bestows, to make our Sermon
Calling and Election sure. This is a good Way
too of bringing Honour and Reputation to
this Ordinance, when the Grace and Spirit
it conveys is demonstrated to all, by the
Fruits it produces in our Lives, when they
see our natural State is quitted, when no
longer its Works appear in us, a Catalogue
of which the Apostle gives us; on the con-
trary, they observe the Fruits of the Spirit
appear in Love, Joy, Peace, Gentleness, and
such like Graces. This releases Baptism from
that slight and Contempt which is cast up-
on it, justifies and recommends it, as it did
anciently; brings the greatest Honour and
Glory to our Church, which insists on it, and
clears up our Title to everlasting Peace and
Happiness hereafter.



SERMON VI.

OF CONFIRMATION.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ACT. VIII. 14, 15, 16, 17.

Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.)

Then laid they their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

THESE Words contain the Substance of the Ordinance of Sermon VI.

THE Confirmation, as received and practised by our Church; and because the Subject is large, and there are several Things in it that will require some Explication and Defence, and

Sermon I would, if possible, say something to each
 VI. of them: I shall, therefore, without any farther
Preface or *Introduction* apply my self
 to these *three Heads* of Discourse.

First, I shall endeavour to shew you the
Nature of this Duty or Ordinance of
Confirmation.

Secondly, I shall lay before you the *Reasons* and *Obligations* all Christian Churches lie under, to continue, and use it.

Thirdly, I shall make some proper *Application* to the Whole.

I. I am to shew you the *Nature* of this Duty or Ordinance of *Confirmation*. This is so well explained by our Church, that any one, if he be not prejudiced against what it teaches, may see the Meaning and Obligation of it; and thither I should send Men, were there not many, with whom the Authority of our Church weighs but little, unless back'd with a greater and more divine Confirmation. And I am not so much concerned to shew the Sense of our Church in this Particular, for that is obvious, as to shew, how well that Sense is grounded; and I hope to consider this Matter with the same Impartiality, as if there was no *Church of England*,

England in Being, or, at least, as if I was no Member of it. In that Case, the Scripture, a Man's own unbiass'd Reason, and the Writings of the purest Ages, can only be one's Guide: From all these Fountains the Reformers drew, but more especially from Scripture; and in this we will endeavour to imitate them, and deduce our Notions of Confirmation from them, and see whether they much differ from what our Church professes, and would bind its Members to. There are these four Things which these Words read to you do very clearly display.

1. That *Confirmation* is an Ordinance distinct from *Baptism*.

2dly, That the End or Intent of its Administration, is for the more confirming Men in the Christian Faith, and for the Receiving the Holy Ghost.

3dly, The Persons concerned in the Administration of this Ordinance; *St. Peter* and *St. John*.

4thly, The devout and pious Manner in which it was done.

1st, It appears clearly, that *Confirmation* is an Ordinance distinct from the Sacrament of *Baptism*. And this the Words of the Text do so evidently imply, that it admits of no Doubt: For the Case was briefly this,

Sermon St. Philip preached the Gospel to the *Samaritans*, and the Effect of that Preaching, together with the Miracles wrought to confirm it, was, that it convinced and astonished the whole City; insomuch, that great Numbers both of Men and Women were converted and baptized; nay, the Arch-magician *Simon* himself was baptized; And they were baptized with what we term Christian Baptism, *they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, says the Text; they were baptized too by one expressly call'd the *Evangelist St. Philip*; One who had the Spirit, and in virtue of it, had wrought many and great Miracles: So that surely here could be no Defect in their Baptism; here was all the Baptism they could have. And yet for all this, *when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John*: And their Business with them, you read was, *to lay their Hands on them* or confirm them. And what is hence to be concluded? Undoubtedly, that the Apostles were of unanimous Opinion at that Time, that it was needful to the Condition of these Converts, that something should be added to Baptism, upon which should depend some especial Benefits, which Baptism did not singly confer on them: Otherwise it is hard to give a good Reason, why, upon the News the Apostles

bles received of the *Samaritans* Conversion Sermon and Baptism, they should be so careful to VI.
 dispatch two of their own Order, *St. Peter* and *St. John*, thither to lay their Hands on them or confirm them. This, I say, must represent Confirmation or Laying-on of Hands, an Ordinance of some Moment in the Christian Faith, or else must shew the Apostles under no very advantageous Character, as imploying their Time, themselves, and one another, and with mighty Zeal travelling to and fro, in vain and insignificant Rites and Errands. And this is farther to be considered likewise; the Persons the Apostles were sent to confirm were Men and Women, of Years of Discretion, who were admitted to Baptism upon Belief and Conviction, and yet the Apostles thought it necessary to confirm these, which shews clearly, that Confirmation is not only needful to such as are baptized in their Infancy, but to all Men whensoever baptized; whether when young, or old: And this shall suffice for the first Thing, that Laying-on of Hands, or Confirmation, is a distinct Rite or Ordinance from Baptism.

2dly, Here is the *End* or *Intent* of its Administration. It is for the more confirming Men in the Christian Faith, and their Receiving the Holy Ghost. The End for which

Sermon St. Peter and St. John were sent to these

VI. Converts, was to pray for them, and lay-on
 Hands; and the End of this was, that they
 might receive the Gifts of the Holy Ghost:
 And not only is this express'd in the Text,
 but it is farther insinuated, that upon this
 solemn Laying-on of Hands, usually the
 Holy Ghost was poured forth upon the Bap-
 tized and Converted, for as yet the Holy
 Ghost was fallen upon none of them, says the
 Text, *only they were baptized in the Name of*
the Lord Jesus. St. Peter and St. John found
 the *Samaritans* only converted and bap-
 tized, they had not yet received the Holy
 Ghost; and why? Was that such a Wonder?
 None at all; for the Reason is added why
 the Holy Ghost had yet fallen on none of
 them, *they had been only baptized in the Name*
of the Lord Jesus; as much as to say, they
 had been merely baptized, had not been yet
 confirmed, the Apostles had not yet laid
 Hands on them; and therefore, all Wonder
 ought to cease in us, that they had not re-
 ceived the Holy Ghost; which must imply
 it to be the Apostle's Expectation, that the
 Holy Ghost should rather be miraculously
 poured forth on Laying-on of Hands, than
 on meer Baptism: Otherwise this Parenthe-
 sis, touching the *Samaritans* not receiving
 the Holy Ghost, because they were *only bap-*
tized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, will
 give

give a Man little Satisfaction, will prove no Sermon
 extraordinary Reason of their not Receiving VI.
 the Holy Ghost; unless, I say, it be supposed
 that, in order to it, they needed the Apostle's
 Prayers, and Laying-on of Hands; and this
 again, must imply it to be a more usual
 Thing, in those Days, to see the Holy Ghost
 given in a greater Measure on laying-on
 the Apostle's Hands, than in baptizing.

3dly, Here are the Persons concerned in
 the Administration of this Rite or Ordinance:
 the Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. John*. *St. Philip*
 had converted and baptized these *Samaritans*,
 and 'tis plain, as he did no more than this,
 so the Apostles at *Jerusalem* expected no
 more from him; hence *St. John* and *St. Pe-*
ter were deputed to perform the Rest; to
 lay on Hands: And what Reason can any
 Man assign, why *St. Philip*, who both con-
 verted and baptized them, should not like-
 wise confirm them? Why should he leave
 the Work imperfect? Or, What should be
 the Ground of that Opinion of the Apostles
 at *Jerusalem*, that *St. Philip* would leave
 something undone towards the Converts at
Samaria, and their sudden Dispatching thi-
 ther *St. Peter* and *St. John*? In a Word, Why
 should *St. Philip* omit the Imposition of
 Hands? Why should the Apostles presume,
 he would omit it, and accordingly send thi-
 ther

Sermon ther others on purpose to do it? Let Preju-
 VI. dice, and Wit, and Malice, muster up Con-
 ceits, as to this, I perswade my self, none
 shall appear so free, and unconstrained, and
 natural, as that it was the Opinion of
 St. Philip, and of the Apostles likewise, that
 Imposition of Hands was a Thing that ex-
 ceeded his Authority; belong'd not to him;
 but was more peculiarly the Business and
 Right of the Apostles. And yet, if we con-
 sider what excellent, wonderful Gifts St. Phi-
 lip had, his Omitting this, was not for Want
 of Knowledge in the Christian Faith, not
 for Want of divine Call, no, nor for Want
 of the Spirit; all this is clear from the Con-
 text: For, at the 6th Verse, you read, *The*
People with one accord gave heed to those
Things that Philip spake, hearing and seeing
the Miracles he did. For unclean Spirits, cry-
ing with a loud Voice, came out of many that
were possessed with them; and many taken with
Palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And
Simon himself wonder'd, beholding the Mi-
racles and Signs which were done by him.
 This Man, St. Philip, acted by immediate
 Revelation, was miraculously call'd, mira-
 culously transported from Place to Place by
 the Spirit: And yet, we see, so inspired a
 Man; one under so absolute a Direction of
 the Spirit; whom a Power of Miracles so
 constantly attended; notwithstanding all
 these

these high Advantages, presumed not to exceed certain Bounds that were set him; broke not in upon the apostolick Office, but left to *them* the Imposition of Hands. And in this *St. Philip* exceeded, I believe, the Expectation of Men the most devoted to Order and Distinction in the Church of God: For, should a Man see a common Christian with such Gifts as *St. Philip* had; such a Power of Miracles; should one see such a Person not only preaching and baptizing, but likewise laying-on of Hands, and ordaining, the very Gifts themselves would be apt to pass with the Beholder, although never so zealous an Episcopalian; supply all other Defects as to Ordination, and reconcile him to the Belief, that all was done agreeably to the divine Will. And yet it was otherwise in the present Case; the Inspiration which *St. Philip* had, which, for ought appears, was as great as any of the Apostles, entitled him not to a Power and Authority to do every Thing in the Church; and sure, it would be very strange if it should: For, How many Ways is the divine Being demonstrated to us to be a God of Order? and if he be thus, it is utterly inconceivable that his Inspiration should teach Men to disregard and overturn all Order, render Men apt to interfere and clash with one another's Office and Business,

Sermon nefs, which would be as absurd and tumultuous in a Church, as, in the natural World, if nothing knew its Place: If these great Orbs above rowled without any Distinction, or Regularity of Motion, and jostled and interfered in their Courses; which would be such blending of Water, Earth, Air, and Light, as would return all to the ancient *Chaos*: And just such Contrivers of a *World* would some Men be, as they are Contrivers of a *Church*, who, upon Pretence of Inspiration, or equal Abilities, would overthrow all Distinction of *Place*, and *Office* in it, make it very lawful for every one to teach, baptize, ordain, and what not.

Who are they then that are to lay-on Hands? It follows clearly; *First*, Not every one that has Authority to preach and baptize; nay, not every one that is inspired; for if Inspiration could have entitled a Man to it, it would have entitled St. *Philip*: And again, It is as clear they must be the *Successors* of the Apostles. But who are they? Undoubtedly such as the Apostles invested with a Power of Laying-on of Hands, in other Cases, such as *Timothy*; but what was *Timothy*, a Priest or a Bishop? We may call him what we please, the Name avails little, only at present I shall say, and I believe most Men will assent to it, that the Apostles were Persons of the highest

highest Power and Authority in the Church; and consequently the Power of Confirming doth of Right adhere to the highest Order that the Apostles constituted, and left behind them? Which, whether it was That of Presbyters or Bishops, as now these Words signify, would be out of my Way to consider, only it is to me demonstrable 'twas That of Bishops.

Sermon
VI.

4thly, This Ordinance was accompanied with Prayer, and other Circumstances. As for Prayer, this is a Part of all religious Ordinances, as it points out God the Fountain and Original of all Good, the Giver of every good and perfect Gift; and much more suitable and needful must Prayer be to the Obtaining the greatest, highest, and best Gift that we are capable of receiving, viz. God's Holy Spirit.

There are other Circumstances which necessarily accompany this Ordinance, although not here expressed, in which Christian Churches have somewhat differed, agreeably to the different States and Conditions of the Baptized; hence our Church directs Questions to such as are to be confirmed, which Custom was built upon primitive Practice, and the highest Reason. Having given this Account of the Ordinance, I proceed to the

II^d Thing,

Sermon

VII



II^d Thing, which was to lay before you the Reasons and Obligations Christian Churches lie under to continue, and use it. And here are these three, which, I should think, must have Weight with all understanding and good Men. It is founded upon the Practice of the Apostles; it is authorized by the Practice of the primitive Church in its purest Times and Ages; and, lastly, there is good Ground for it in the Nature of the Thing.

I. It is founded upon the Practice of the Apostles. The Text is so full to this Purpose, that if the *New Testament* had no other Passage concerning it, *this* alone would have undeniably shew'd us both the Opinion and Usage of the Founders of our Religion. But their Practice in this, is confirmed at many other Places. As in *Acts* xix. 5. *And when they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his Hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues and prophesied.* The Person that laid on Hands was an Apostle; it is delivered as distinct from Baptism, and the End for which it is done, is clearly suggested, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost came on them upon his Laying-on of Hands, as it did on

on the Samaritan Converts, upon St. Peter and St. John's doing the same. Hence we see too, that even when the Apostles baptized Men, they likewise laid-on Hands, which shews us yet more clearly their Opinion; that it was distinct from Baptism; and of egregious Use to the Baptized; and that the Gift of the Holy Ghost was not so much annexed to the Person of the Apostles, to honour them more than others, as some have apprehended, as to the Ordinance it self; for, if so, when the Apostle St. Paul baptized, Why should not the Spirit be poured out? but so it was not when an Apostle baptized: The miraculous Gift of the Spirit seem'd rather to follow on Laying-on of Hands, than Baptizing, which seems to dignify, and set forth, and recommend this Ordinance in a very peculiar and extraordinary Manner. I shall mention but one Text more to this Purpose, viz. *Heb. vj. 1, 2. Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance, and Faith toward God, of the Doctrines of Baptisms, and Laying-on of Hands, and of Resurrection of the Dead, and of eternal Judgment. So that Laying-on of Hands is reckoned one of the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ; it stands with such Articles as these, Faith, and Repentance,*
the

Sermon the Resurrection of the Dead, and eternal

VI. Judgment; and whosoever thinks Laying-on of Hands, or Confirming, an impertinent Ceremony, may as well conclude the same of those high and important Articles, and part with all as needless and Impertinent.

And all this, I should think, to any modest, good, and sensible Christian, should be Authority or Proof enough for any Practice in the Church, that the immediate Apostles of our Lord practised it. If any Man should say, he despairs of seeing a Church more reformed, or better modelled than the *Church of England*, such a Man speaks agreeable to his Profession, and likewise to Truth; but all Men do not see this Truth, and so it will not pass universally: But I hope this may pass with all modest, sober, and sincere Christians, of what Persuasion soever; and therefore this I may be allowed to affirm, that one may despair of seeing a Church more Pure, more Reformed, than That was which the Apostles immediately constituted; and what they practised without Blame, or any Sort of Reprehension, must give unexceptionable Ground for all, or any Churches in the World to practise. For, What Man can be so fanciful to think, That the Authority of the Apostles cannot bind, That will adventure
to

to reform or spiritualize a Church, beyond Sermon
the Mark the Apostles have set us; or, VI.
which is all one, beyond what the Spirit
of God itself hath directed and established?
If any Man will do this, that Man cannot
hold the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith
and Practice; and consequently, cannot
hold the great uncontested Principle of all
Protestant Churches, which will render him
a very indifferent Protestant. For, if any
Rite or Ordinance which the Apostles used,
without the least Reflection or Blame laid
on it, throughout the whole *New Testament*;
if such a Rite or Ordinance, after all, may
be only a vain and insignificant Ceremony,
a Rag of judaizing Popery, or the like, the
Man that affirms this, must derive his
Knowledge, as to this Particular, not from
Scripture, but something else; from some-
thing, I say, that is above Scripture, and
above any Thing the Apostles had. And
what is this but to discard Scripture, and
set a Man's self up above all Scripture, and
above the Apostles, which, to all wise Men,
as I said, must shew a Man a very indif-
ferent and odd Protestant.

But admitting we should suppose the
Apostles were permitted to use some insig-
nificant Rites or Ceremonies, (which Sup-
position, I am sensible, will grate upon the
Ears of all sober and good Christians;) yet

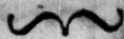
Sermon it cannot be imagined, in the present Case,
 V. that *Laying-on of Hands* could be one of
 these; because God confirmed and authorized it by Miracles, he set his own Seal to the Importance of this Ordinance, by attending it with *miraculous Gifts, with Tongues, and Prophecy, &c.*

2. Confirmation, or Laying-on of Hands, is authorized by the primitive Church in its purest Times and Ages. And this a Man will be very prone to believe, that has a tolerable Opinion, I do not say of the *Understanding*, (for That some can easily give up) but of the *Zeal* and the *Piety* of the first Christians: For it may be rationally expected, that Men that died for the Sake of the Christian Faith, should imitate the Examples of the Apostles, from whom they derived it. And so one may affirm boldly they did; and we shall hardly read of an ancient Church, in which Imposition of Hands was not used, as a Thing of Moment to the Converted and Baptized: As soon as ever there was Occasion given of expressing any Thing in Regard to the Discipline, or the Usage of the Church, this is mentioned as One that prevailed from the Apostle's Time. It is generally held, that while the Church continued under Persecution, which it did more or less till the
 Time

Time of *Constantine*, it was tolerably free from Innovation and Superstition: Authorities therefore that are found within that Compass of Time, must be judged sound and authentick. I should begin with *Justin Martyr*, who flourished early in the second Century, but that there is some Dispute among the Criticks, whether the Book *ad Orthodoxos*, in which he concerns himself in this Point, be genuine or not. *Tertullian* represents this Duty, as observed not only by the Orthodox, but Hereticks, in his Book of the Resurrection of the Flesh against *Marcion*: And likewise in his Treatise of Baptism. Few Men are ignorant of the Figure *St. Cyprian* made in the Church for Learning, Zeal, and Piety, who suffered Martyrdom about the Year 257, and he, at many Places, asserts Confirmation as a Duty of great Moment, and universally practised in the Church. I shall cite a Passage or two to this Purpose in his 73d Epistle to *Jubaiano*: He says, upon this Place of Scripture which I have made my Text, Those that were baptized by *Philip* the Deacon, were not again re-baptized by the Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. John*: That which was only wanting to them, was supplied by the Apostles; namely, That by Prayers, and Imposition of Hands, they might receive the Holy Ghost; which Custom, says

Sermon

VI.



he, is observed amongst us: Such as are baptized in the Church, are again offered to the *Prepositi's* of the Church, which is generally his Term for *Bishops*; such as are baptized, are offered or set before Bishops, and by their Prayers and Imposition of Hands receive the Holy Ghost. The same he again asserts to *Stephanus*, Bishop of *Rome*: And it so falls out, that, through the Controversy that then was on Foot between the Bishop of *Rome* and *St. Cyprian*, concerning Re-baptizing such as came off from heretical Churches, the Sense and Usage of other Churches, as well as that over which *St. Cyprian* presided, manifestly appears. The Bishop of *Rome* allowed of this Usage, and so did all the Rest, although they differed in other Things: And there is hardly a Writer of any Moment in the Christian Church, but mentions *Imposition of Hands*, as a Thing of unquestionable Authority and Moment; as any one may see in *Clemens Romanus*, *St. Jerom*, *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*, and in many others. I proceed therefore to

The 3d Thing, *viz.* To shew you there is very good Ground, in the Nature of the Thing, for this. It cannot be supposed that, upon the Multiplying of Christians, and Christian Churches, the Bishops could baptize all; neither was it so in the Apostles Days,

Days, but others were deputed by them, of Sermon
an inferior Order, to baptize, and teach, VI.
and administer the Sacrament. And if there
be such an Order as That of Bishops, (as a
Man must grant, or else he must disown the
most approved Books and Records of the
Christian Church; he must deny not only
one Passage, but many; not only one Book,
but many; upon which Principle he may
deny almost any Thing: I began to say, if
there be such an Order as That of Bishops)
who sent forth others to teach, and the
like, as Christ sent forth the Apostles, and
the Apostles sent forth others; it is plain,
from *Them* is derived the Authority which
inferior Orders have in the Church, and in
this Channel it descends on Christian Pro-
fessors, together with the divine Graces and
Blessings. And if this be a true Doctrine
(as the more a Man considers it impartial-
ly, the more he shall be persuaded of it)
What more agreeable to this Constitution,
than that one in Person, the Bishop, who is
the Head of a particular Church, should in-
form himself of the Condition of the Bap-
tized and Converted; should examine, in a
publick Manner, into the Belief and Im-
provement of the Baptized; should receive,
from their own Mouth, their Embracement
and Profession of the Christian Faith and
Doctrine; should solemnly offer up his
Prayers

Sermon Prayers to God for them, and as solemnly
 VI. bless them?

Of this, methinks, even the Baptized should be fond; for Bishops are frequently stiled spiritual *Fathers*: And if Men are fond, and look not upon it as a vain and idle Ceremony, to be blessed by their earthly Parents, Why should they not esteem the Blessing of their spiritual Ones? Why should not this have, at least, as good an Effect as the Blessing of earthly Parents? Surely it contributes very much to the Reverence of Bishops, and this tends as much to Obedience, Union, and Modesty among Christian Professors! Vertues that once, that is anciently, were esteemed. He that bears little or no Respect to a Bishop, is likely to bear less to a common Teacher; and he that bears little or no Respect to any Officer in a Church, the Church it self, its Doctrines, and Ordinances are likely to be of little Moment or Use to him. These Considerations, I confess, will very much stand or fall with the Authority of Bishops; if Men disallow of their Order, they may disallow of my Reasoning: If Men condemn Bishops, I do not see any Reason why they should not condemn common Teachers, who derive their Authority from them, and I believe Experience shews the Truth of this.

But

But yet farther; Such as disallow of the Sermon Order of Bishops, must own Confirmation necessary, if they allow of Baptizing of Infants; they will lie extreemly exposed to the Attacks of *Quakers* and *Anabaptists*, without the Supposition of Confirmation; neither can I see what can defend them: For it is too true, what they say, That Children are insensible of what they do, or is done for them, in Baptism; and so they are too frequently afterwards, even when they come to Years of Understanding and Discretion. By the Virtue of Baptism they are reputed Believers, and partake of all the outward Privileges of Christianity; and yet peradventure they neither believe, nor understand any Article of the Christian Faith; neither know nor practise the Duties of the Religion they profess; the evil Consequences of which are well known: For, hence it is that there is too frequently such a horrid Mixture in the Church; that Atheists, Hereticks, Deists, besides so many ungodly Livers, pass under the Name of Christians. The ancient Church had divers Ways of remedying this, all of which we have almost lost: Among the Rest, this of Confirmation was one, wherein, upon Information, and Understanding, and Belief of the Christian Doctrine, the Baptized makes that his own express Act, which was

VI.

Sermon before that of others, takes upon himself

VI. what was engaged for him, and ratifies all in his own Person. This wipes off all Objections against Infant-Baptism, and without this there will be required more Wit, entirely to answer them, than I am capable of.

I proceed to the Application, which was the III^d Thing; which shall be to these two Purposes.

1st, To consider briefly the *Objections* that have been started against this Ordinance.

2^{dly}, To remember *Parents* of their *Duty* in this Particular.

1st, To consider briefly the *Objections* that have been started against this Ordinance. The Arguments Men have used against *Confirmation*, have been chiefly directed against the Abuses of it, against the impertinent Ceremonies of the *Roman Church*, which makes it a Sacrament, uses *Oil*, or *Chrism*, as they express it, in its Administration; and, for all this, alledges the Authority of the Fathers. As to the First, That Confirmation is a *Sacrament*, in the *strict* Sense of the Word, cannot be proved from the early Fathers: For it is clear, they call every Thing a Sacrament that is in the least figurative

figurative and typical, as might be shewn Sermon
in innumerable Instances; and, doubtless, VI.
never dreamed they should be so understood
as the *Roman* Church understands them:

And as for the Business of *Oil*, or *Chrism*,
it must be granted, in some Churches it
early prevailed, although not in all. But
what is all this to us? What if the *Roman*
Church, or any other Church; nay, What
if the Fathers us'd Oil? Our Church pre-
scribes no such Thing; we acknowledge not
the *Roman* Church; no, not the Fathers;
none infallible but Christ and the Apostles.
The Scripture is the infallible Rule both of
Faith and Practice to us. And upon this
Principle our Reformers went; what, in the
purest Ages of the Church, is found agreea-
ble to the Word of God, that our Refor-
mers preserved, and for good Reason; be-
cause they looked upon the Scripture, full
and sufficient, as to all Things necessary to
Salvation; and in this particular Case they
conceived, what the Apostles used not,
they might as safely not use. What then?
Do we condemn the Fathers, because we
follow them not in all Things? Not at all;
unless this be condemning the Fathers, viz.
not admitting them as infallible as the
Apostles.

And again, *Confirmation* others affirm to
be unnecessary, because the Spirit, which is
the

Sermon the Intent of it, is fully confer'd in Baptism. And as to this, divers Texts of Scripture are urged, that the Grace of God, Forgiveness of Sins, is bestowed in Baptism. If the Spirit is bestowed in Baptism, What need of Confirmation? nay, it is not only *useless* but *detrimental*, for it teaches Men to undervalue *Baptism*, an Ordinance of our Saviour's own express Institution, and to magnify *Confirmation*, as the Grace of God is made more to depend on it than on Baptism it self. Thus a meer humane Invention is prefer'd before a divine Ordinance. To this Purpose some Men have disputed.

But this as little affects us as the Former; for, we are far from denying a Communication of divine Grace and Assistance at Baptism, as may be seen both in the Order of Baptism, and Confirmation, in the Latter of which, the Blessing of the Bishop implies, That the Person to be confirmed is not void of the divine Grace; neither doth our Church deny any Thing that the Scripture and early Fathers make consequent on Baptism; as Forgiveness of Sins, Regeneration, and the like; so that nothing do we derogate from Baptism. It is true, indeed, this we do affirm, That Confirmation is a reasonable and wise Institution, and that it has some Effect toward the Promoting of true Godliness; and if this be derogating

rogating from Baptism, then, after Baptism, Sermon
 Hearing the Word of God, Praying, Recei- VI.
 ving the Sacrament, must be discarded; for
 these would derogate from Baptism like-
 wise, because all Men that use them, look
 upon them as Means of Grace and Salva-
 tion: But few Men, I suppose, conceive
 the Effects of Baptism to be so great as to
 render useless all other After-means and
 Ordinances; to render all farther Supplies
 of Grace unnecessary: And if Men may be
 supposed to receive Grace after Baptism,
 without lessening the Effects of Baptism,
 Confirmation will very well stand and agree
 with Baptism, at least as well as any other
 Means of Grace. I shall pursue this no far-
 ther, but proceed,

2dly, To Remember Christian Parents of
 their Duty in this Particular. All Men in
 the Communion of our Church, are suppo-
 sed to be satisfied in the *Doctrine* and *Disci-
 pline* of it, or else it will severely reflect
 upon them, that they continue in it: For,
 What should keep a Man in the Commu-
 nion of any Church against his Conscience?
 What but temporal Interest? And That is
 so bad a Ground of Conformity, that it will
 almost argue a Man of no Principle or Re-
 ligion. Of this Sort therefore, I will not
 believe any, because it hath so high a Re-
 flection

Sermon VI. reflection upon a Man, that it is next Door to the Condemning him of having no Religion. And yet, we that profess our selves of this Church, that are Frequenters of it, must find a Reason, if we can, why we are sometimes so very cool in Regard to its Rules and Directions; and especially, when these Rules and Ordinances, as in the present Case, we see, are grounded upon the Practice of the Apostles, and purest Ages of the Church, and upon very good Reason drawn from the Nature of the Thing. It must be somewhat very material that can confront, and bear down such Authorities as these are; and it really becomes all Christian Parents, diligently to consider, when they read in the *New Testament*, what miraculous Gifts and Graces followed on the Apostles Laying-on of Hands; I say, it becomes them very seriously to consider, whether their depriving their Children of this, may not be the Way to deprive them of very great Blessings and Assistances. What Parent that loved the *spiritual Good*, as well as the *Temporal*, the Soul as well as Body of his Children, would not dread this? It is marvellous to see the Difference, I do not say between the Doctrines, but the Practices and Measures of the primitive Church and ours, in order to make Men good Christians. It would surprize one to read with what

what Zeal and Solemnity Baptism was both desired and administred in early Times. A Man may guess at the exceeding Care, Caution, and Zeal of the early Christians, to make all such, as were admitted into the Church, true and good Members, from what remains still in ours; I mean from the *Sponsors* or Godfathers, wherein, it seem'd the Sense of the Church and its abundant Caution, not to trust singly to the Care of Parents, but to engage others, who should promise, in case of Death, Persecution, or such Accidents, that the Baptized should be instructed, and bred-up in the Knowledge, Faith, and Practice of their Religion; and all this was done, *That every one that named the Name of Christ, should depart from Iniquity.* When a Man reads this of the ancient Way and Practice, one can hardly forbear blushing at the Administration of this Ordinance in our Times. But this is *from* my Purpose. Again: What Care was taken for the Instructing and fitting Children, according to their Engagements, for their being presented to the Bishop to be confirmed. These were some of the Methods the old Christians took, and Fact shew'd them in the Right: For what Church hath been so fruitful of holy Livers and Martyrs as the primitive Church hath been? We complain of the contrary; of much

Sermon
VI.
~

Sermon much Looseness and Immorality under the
 VI. outward Profession of Christianity, and the
 Complaint is too just; witness the late
 Endeavours and Attempts of good Men to
 reform them. And all that I say is, it will
 become good Men to consider, whether this
 Difference in the Lives of Men, doth not
 much arise from Neglect of the Ways and
 Measures that former and more pious Ages
 took: That which would make a wise and
 good Man suspect this, is not only the bet-
 ter Success of ancient Times, but likewise
 the Reason of the Thing. O God! if the
 Zeal that possesseth Men to instil Religion,
 was express'd in the ancient Way, accord-
 ing to Scripture, Reason, and Primitive
 Times, how great would be the Fruit and
 Effect! But thou, whose Zeal leads thee to
 reform and amend a stubborn Sinner, dread-
 est, as an unreasonable Load and Burden,
 to be obliged to inspect, and take care of,
 the right Principling of a Child: This is
 sure perverse: For, How can Parents expect
 that their Children should prove good Chri-
 stians, when they are never instructed in
 the Christian Faith? And that they are ne-
 ver instructed, is much owing to a Want of
 Sense in Parents, that they ought to be con-
 firm'd. They are baptized, and therein
 they renounce *the World, the Flesh, and the*
Devil, it is true; but do they know any
 Thing

Thing of this? Not without Instruction afterwards, at Years of Discretion, are they made sensible of this, and if they are made sensible of their Engagements, methinks it should add fresh Obligations to them, prove a Comfort to their Parents, as well as Satisfaction to others; if they publickly and solemnly owned and declared it. But they hear Sermons: But, Would they hear them the Worse for this, if they were confirm'd? I am persuaded to better Purpose; for then, in all Likelihood, they would come better disposed, better grounded in the Christian Faith. Perfection in any Thing, proceeds gradually; will any Man of common Sense, in order to learn a Child his native Tongue, read to him out of the most eloquent Books of that Kind, or not rather, begin with the first Elements, and Rudiments of the Language? The Former would be a strange Practice; and there is not Abundance of Difference in the present Case, where Men rely entirely on Preaching for the Instruction of their Children; for Preaching is chiefly directed to Men, and it is supposed they are competently instructed in the Grounds of the Christian Faith: And where they fail of this, Preaching must unavoidably fail very much too of its Effect. To omit, how soon, without Instruction, as the Age is now disposed, the Habits of Vice, Contempt

Sermon tempt of Things sacred, creep in and take
 VI. hold of the Minds of Children; and as
 they grow up, what a light and indifferent
 Thing they make both of Preaching and
 Hearing; and too frequently it becomes
 with them, rather a Mode or Fashion, per-
 adventure an Object of their Ridicule, than
 of their Reverence, or a Means of Grace
 unto Salvation. Any Man would grossly
 misapprehend me here, if he understands
 me in least derogating from the Use of
 Preaching; all I mean is, what the Apostle
 in another Case means, *If all were the
 Hearing, where were then the Smelling, &c.*
 If all were Preaching, What will become
 of other Ordinances. To shew you, that
 this is not a particular Opinion of our
 Church, and that Men may be very good
 Protestants, and yet submit to this Practice,
 I shall conclude with the Words of Mr. Cal-
 vin: " Would to God, says he, the ancient
 " Rite of Confirming were revived, where-
 " in the Baptized publickly, before the
 " Church, professed and repeated the Ar-
 " ticles of the Christian Faith; this Disci-
 " pline, if it now prevailed, would un-
 " doubtedly shame the Negligence of Pa-
 " rents, who securely omit the Instruction
 " of their Children, as a Thing not be-
 " longing to them; which they could not
 " do without publick Disgrace. There
 " would

“ would follow greater Agreement, as to Sermon
“ Matters of Religion, and greater Know- VI.
“ ledge among Christians; neither would
“ Men be so liable to be abused, and im-
“ posed upon with false and corrupt Opi-
“ nions; There would, *Lastly*, be a cer-
“ tain Method of Instructing Men in the
“ Christian Faith, which could not easily
“ fail of good Effects!”



we will follow in the same manner as to
 "Matters of Religion and greater Know-
 "ledge among Christians; neither would
 "it be to little to be abused, and im-
 "posed upon with false and corrupt Op-
 "inions: There would, I say, be a cer-
 "tain Method of instructing Men in the
 "Christian Faith, which could not easily
 "fall of good Effect."



195
Sermon
VII
SERMON VII.

OF CONFESSION and
ABSOLUTION.

2 COR. II. 7.

*Least perhaps such a One should be swallowed
up with overmuch Sorrow.*

ALTHOUGH the Word Con- Sermon
fession, which is my Subject, VII.
A be not in the Text, yet, I
hope, the Thing intended by
it is, and in very clear and
significant Terms. And I chuse to treat of
Confession in the peculiar Sense that these
Words of the Apostle imply, because, I guess,
it cometh up more closely to the Purpose
and

Sermon and Design of the worthy FOUNDER of
 VII. this *Lecture*; the Scope of which seemeth
 plainly, from the Nature of the Subjects he
 hath pitch'd upon, to be to revive and re-
 commend *primitive Christianity*; or, in other
 Words, to lead Men into the Knowledge
 and Approbation of some antient Truths
 and Practices, which, through the Dissolute-
 ness, or at least the peculiar and evil Turn
 of the Age, seem much lost and forgotten,
 or else despised and ridiculed.

On the Words I shall

First, Consider the *Nature* of this Sorrow
 or *Confession* under which the Person in
 the Text lay.

Secondly, Endeavour to justify and recom-
 mend the Practice hereof, from several,
 I hope, weighty Considerations.

Thirdly, Draw some general Reflections
 or Corollaries from the Whole, by Way
 of Application.

I. I shall consider the *Nature* of this Sor-
 row or *Confession* under which the Person in
 the Text lay. I join them together, because
 there is a peculiar Sort of Confession, as will
 presently appear, not popish or supersti-
 tious,

tious, but very laudable and good, and which differeth nothing from what the Apostle here understandeth by Sorrow.

Sermon
VII.

The History of the Person in the Text, lying under so great Degrees of Sorrow that there was Danger at last of his being overwhelmed in it, is largely enough set forth in these Epistles, to satisfy our present Enquiry. He was not simply a Fornicator, but Incestuous, which was such an Offence and Dishonour to the Christian Name and Profession to which he pretended, that, in those strict Times, he could not be born with in it; but by the Apostle's especial Order he was excommunicated, publicly disgraced, and dismiss'd from all christian Society and Intercourse; could be no longer accounted a Christian, no longer admitted to the Church, the Prayers, the Sacraments, the Company of the Faithful. And the End of this Severity, partly, was to humble and mortify the Sinner, from the Loss of those rich and inestimable Privileges he formerly enjoyed, and had no better used, to raise in him a due Sight of his Sins, as well as the most eager Desires of recovering his former Station and Advantages in the christian Church; and the most firm Resolutions and Endeavours of approving himself a better Member of it.

Sermon
VII.

This wise and godly Discipline, through the divine Blessing upon it, had its desired Effect; softened and melted the incestuous Man, let go upon him Shame, Fear, Remorse, and Stings of Conscience, and all the evil and sad Concomitants of Guilt; which did prey inwardly upon his Mind, and not only appear secretly to God, but outwardly too, to the Sight of all Beholders. In this evil Plight he lay, covered with Shame, Sorrow, and Confusion, as an Object of great Pity in the Eye of the whole Church, confessing, deploring, lamenting, aggravating his former Iniquities; his present Infelicity and Unworthiness; soliciting the Pardon of God, and the Prayers of all good Men: No Wonder such Signs of Repentance and Humiliation moved the Compassion of the Apostle when he heard of it, and that he gave as strict Orders about his Admission into the Church, as before he had done as to his Ejection out of it.

My Business will not be here to enlarge upon the Censures of the Church, which, upon such Practices as this Man was guilty of, very worthily ejected him; neither upon such a Man's Absolution, or Re-admission again into the Church; but only to consider the intermediate Estate, between his Expulsion and Admission, the Temper of his Mind in this Interval, his Deportment

ment and Behaviour under his Sentence, *Sermon*
which obtained Pardon of God, and in a *VII.*
good Measure retrieved his Credit and Character with good Christians.

The Apostle says, that his Sorrow was so great, that it was like to overwhelm, instead of humbling him; and as, before, Suffering him to continue *in* the Church, might endanger his eternal Welfare; so now, to *exclude* him any longer, might work the same bad Effect: And as before, Sorrow was needful to his Condition, so now, on the contrary, Comfort became the properest Application and Remedy, and it was the Church's Duty and Wisdom speedily to administer it.

In this Penitent we see the sad and melancholy Estate of one, who lay under the Sentence of Excommunication for notorious Crimes: What a deep Sense he had of his Condition! what outward Testimony he gave all Men of his inward Grief and Remorse! and what a real Change and Alteration was made of his Mind and Heart for the better. 'Tis true, indeed, the Manner and Circumstances of his Humiliation are not particularly described; yet, that it had in it the bitterest Ingredients, the saddest and mournfulest Ways of Expression, that it appeared in all the true and unfeigned Forms of Grief and Repentance, and that

Sermon there was nothing wanting to it that could
VII. possibly demonstrate Truth and Sincerity
 in a Man, a truly humbled and penitent
 Mind; I say, all this is very clear from
 the general Reflection the Apostle passes on
 it, which implies, that instead of its being
 deficient, it was rather excessive: It was so
 great, that he could not with any Safety
 be permitted to go farther, or stay longer
 in it, it was so great that he could not sub-
 sist, but, without speedy Relief, must sink
 down and perish under it.

And this was one Method of Discipline
 in the early and primitive Church, which
 the Bishops and Pastors of it stood to, and
 maintained with the utmost Zeal and Fi-
 delity: Nor was it the odd Rigour and Au-
 sterity of a single Church, or Bishop, but
 of the universal Church; of which there is
 the most clear Testimony and Record in the
 best and most early Writers and Fathers.
 As they would not permit Men of wicked
 Principles and Lives to remain in the
 Church, or own them as Members, so nei-
 ther would they again admit such, without
 their giving the most ample Testimony and
 Satisfaction as to their Conversion and
 Amendment. And this Course of publick
 Sorrow and Humiliation, which the Can-
 didates for *Absolution* were bound to ex-
 press, in the intermediate State between
 their

their Expulsion and Re-admission, was frequently term'd, in ancient Time, *Exhomologesis* or Confession, which imply'd not a single Act, but many, sometimes a long Period of Grief and Mourning; for, if the Excommunicate aspired after Peace and Communion with the Church, (and if they did not they were very worthily deem'd obdurate) they must not think sullenly to retire, or remove themselves at a Distance, but appear in the Eye and Face of the Church; and not as Men whom nothing ailed; not with an Air of Unconcernment, Pride, or Defiance; but in the most humble and abject Posture, under all the Marks of true Sorrow and Grief, in Language, in Habit, in Demeanour, as Men greatly afflicted and distressed in Mind and Conscience; as sustaining the heavy Burthen of their Sins, and the Wrath of God upon them. And frequently the Resort of these unhappy Men, was the Entrance into the Church; there would they croud, there would they prostrate themselves, and lie groveling on the Ground, there would they lament and bewail their Miscarriages, their present sad Condition: What Fears and Agonies would they there express! What Floods of Tears pour forth! How earnestly implore the Mercy of God, and the Prayers of all that enter'd! Certainly a very mourn-
ful

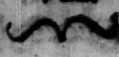
Sermon full and moving Scene, and especially as described by St. Cyprian and other Fathers who occasionally relate it!

Neither was this sad and melancholy Appearance *abroad*, enough to recommend such Men to the Pity of the Church, unless they were all of a Piece, the same at home too, and in their Conversations and Retirements. It was no easy Matter to act a counterfeit Part in those Times, or impose upon the Church by it, which had little Regard to any outward Expressions or Signs of Sorrow in Publick, unless Prayers and Fastings in their own Houses, and Humility, Modesty, and such like Vertues in their Conversations joined with, and confirmed them. At the Church-door humble, and sorrowful, and mortified; and at home gay, and indulging their Appetites; before the Bishop and whole Church, to cry and lament, and condemn themselves, and at some Remove, in common Transactions and Affairs with their Neighbours, to look and talk big; these were too gross and open Contradictions to pass upon the Severity of those Times.

As to the Time, how long this mournful State lasted, before it was different and various according to the Nature of the Crimes, for which Men were ejected: In some Cases, and for some Offences, it held long,

long, often two or three Years; unless Danger and near Approach of Death, or such like Causes shortned it: For the primitive Church and Bishops (as some censure) were very (if not too) hard and severe in this Particular; could endure to see Men lie long in this mournful and disconsolate Estate, or, as it may be more truly and justly, perhaps, said, in their Vindication, were not too indulging, too easy of believing every transient and violent Fit of Sorrow, or outward Expression of it; but judg'd of its Truth and Reality, rather from its Continuance and Uniformity, than from its present sudden Transport. But this is not my Business here; I am only forming and presenting you now with a general Idea of what I have met with up and down, as to the Satisfaction the Bishops and whole Church, Laity as well as Clergy, expected and insisted on from Offenders, 'ere they would again admit them. And it is most certain, *where* and *when* the Vigour of Discipline remained *good* and *pure*, that they did not trifle in this Point, were not remiss or loose in it, but required of excommunicated Men, sound and good Proof of their present Remorse and Repentance, and better Behaviour for the Future. Had Men vouched impious and erroneous Doctrines, and was this the Cause of their Expulsion; the

Sermon the Church would have good Security,
VII. that they had really, and from their Hearts,
 quitted them, that they had really humbled
 themselves for them, which could no other-
 wise appear, than by a hearty Concernment
 for the Offence, for the Evil that such Do-
 ctrines produced, and by earnest Endeavours to prevent the Growth and Infection
 of them. So that such were to take upon
 themselves the publick Shame and Morti-
 fication of having been in Error themselves,
 and of leading others into it. And of the
 Sincerity of all this, *Time* was a good Test;
 about which there was great Room and Oc-
 casion for the Church's Wisdom, as well as
 Mercy; that, on the one Side, by too much
 Haste and Lenity, she might not be imposed
 upon by cunning and false Disguises, or an
 immature Repentance; neither, on the other
 Side, appear too rigid and inexorable, and
 so plunge Men into Desperation instead of
 true Penitency. Again: Had Men given
 great Offence and Scandal by their immoral
 and vicious Lives, and had these Causes se-
 parated them from the Church's Commu-
 nion; there was no Entrance again for
 such Men, but by a Demeanour suitable to
 their Condition: The most natural and
 lively Signs of deep Contrition and Humi-
 lity, of Anguish and Remorse, were the
 Things that must raise them to their former
 Pri-

Priviledges; were what must recommend Sermon them, and beget in their Brethren strong VII.
Hopes of their real Conversion, and God 
Almighty's Pardon. And this Course of
publick as well as private Humiliation and
Sorrow, gradually drew the Church's Re-
gard, Charity, and Commiseration, and
made them Candidates for Absolution or Re-
admission.

Then followed another more particular
Exhomologesis or Confession. For upon their
appearing thus penitent and qualified, upon
their earnest Entreaties and Intercession, the
whole Church, the Bishop, the inferior Cler-
gy, and Laity met, and before the whole
Assembly, the Clergy sitting, and Laity
standing, the Offenders appeared; and, in
Sight and Hearing of them all, made Con-
fession of their several Crimes; in the
most strong and significant Terms, expres-
sed their Recantation, their Abhorrence and
Detestation of such and such Opinions or
Practices, their Sorrow for them, and their
Resolutions and Endeavours, by the Grace
of God, of never committing or entertain-
ing the like: Then followed *Absolution*, and
they were again looked upon as Brethren,
and admitted to all the Acts of Commu-
nion.

And thus I have given you a general
Idea of one Branch of Confession that was
in

Sermon in the primitive Church. The Practice, I
 VII. doubt, appeareth very *strange*, if not *worse*,
 to many of you. I therefore proceed to

The *Second* Thing, which was to justify
 and recommend this Sort of Confession or
 Discipline from several, I hope, weighty
 Considerations.

Men who have not due Apprehensions of
 this Matter, will want Information and Con-
 viction in two Things.

I. That the Governours of the Church
 did wisely and religiously in exacting from
 excommunicated Persons such Terms as to
 Re-admission. And

II. That the Excommunicated had the
 highest Reason to submit to them.

1st, That the Governours of the Church
 did wisely and religiously in exacting of
 excommunicated Persons such Terms as to
 Re-admission.

The Wisdom and Godliness of this Me-
 thod will be questioned by none, who con-
 sider from whence it proceeded. It has the
 same divine Authority as the *New Testament*
 it self hath, being indeed a Part of it.

For

For with what Zeal doth the Apostle St. Paul Sermon press the Church of *Corinth* to exert its Authority, and eject this incestuous Member? His Words are, *Therefore put away from among you that wicked Person.* And not only were all such to be put away, who had committed the like abominable Crimes as Incest; but others likewise, guilty of Sins, of which the World commonly entertains a more favourable Opinion: He gives the same Injunction as to *Fornicators, Covetous, Idolaters, Railers, Drunkards, Extortioners*; all such Men, upon Admonition were not to pass under the Name of Christians, and bring Scandal to it, but were to be cut off from all christian Intercourse and Fellowship.

Neither doth he treat Inventers of strange Doctrines with more Mildness or Indulgence: Behold what he giveth in Charge to Timothy, *A Man that is a Heretick reject, after the first and second Admonition.*

This is short Work, you will say, with Hereticks; but so it was, and so the divine Spirit enacteth: Men were no more at Liberty, under the outward Profession of Christianity, to believe or teach what they listed, than they were to live as they listed, but their Faith was as confined and fixed as their Practice: Which I must confess very much spoiled *Free-thinking*, but this

Sermon

VII.

this Inconvenience the christian Church then did not esteem so great an Evil as latter Ages have since done. But I must not stay long here, it being another's Province; and I should not have so far transgress'd, had it not been to derive some Light and Authority on my own Argument: For, if wicked Lives and Principles, by the express Command and Authority of God, would, and ought to, exclude a Man from the Church of Christ; the same ill Lives and Principles remaining, should be an insuperable Barr against the Re-admission of such a One, and there is the same divine Authority for both; or, more properly, the same Obligation lying upon the Church and its Pastors, to keep such a Man out of it, as at first to excommunicate him. And this establishes this primitive Method of Sorrow, Humiliation, publick Confession, and Recantation, upon the same divine Authority as Church-censures stand; because, what, but these and such like, can denote a Change of Mind? A Man was certainly unjustly at first rejected, if, remaining the same, he can be again received into the Bosom of the Church; and if a Man be altered, and on that Pretence presents himself to the Church's good Opinion and Mercy, *outward* Signs must accompany and denote this *inward* Change, or else how shall the

the Church know it. So that if Church-
censures are grounded on the divine Com-
mand and Authority, this publick Sorrow
and Confession will not be destitute of it.
And it was this, and this only, that so al-
tered the Mind and Proceeding of the Apo-
stle towards so great a Sinner in the Text.

Sermon
VII.

And so the primitive Church understood
it; for when any Endeavours were used, as
sometimes there were, to reconcile excom-
municated Persons, or great Sinners, to the
Peace of the Church, without undergo-
ing publick Humiliation, always such
Endeavours were opposed and rejected
by good and wise Governours, under the
Style of their being contrary to the apo-
stolical Rule, or Doctrine, or Canon: So
that this was not a Branch of Discipline de-
rived from a general Power lodg'd in the
Church, to exercise or omit upon Occasion,
as Prudence should direct; not alterable as
a Mode, or Custom, or Ceremony may be;
not peculiar only to one Age, Time, or Place,
as many Things of an indifferent Nature,
and meer human Institution; are but is an
unalterable Thing, a Practice always in-
cumbent upon the Church to exact, in all
Ages, Places, and Times; and what can never
be drop'd without a manifest and great De-
fect either in the Church's Constitution, or
Governours, or Members. And upon what

Sermon Reasons this standeth, I shall as briefly as
 VII. possible shew you.

1. Without this, a Church would abuse that Power that is lodged with her: A very extraordinary Power is indeed granted the Church; a Power of Absolving, of Binding or Loosing, with a Promise that her Acts shall stand good, and be ratified in Heaven. But we know very well Heaven absolves or admits no impenitent Men; the Conditions on which God Almighty will pardon, are very clearly express'd; and if the Church would have her Absolutions signify any Thing, or be ever made Good above, she must carefully regard the same Conditions, admit none to Pardon but upon the Terms that God Almighty admits them. Now he exacteth Sorrow and Humiliation for the Sins and Indignities we offer him; and if the Church should not so, She is, I am sure, illy intrusted with such a Power, and at last her Pardons would prove the grandest Cheats.

2. Without Exacting this publick Confession and Sorrow, a Church would be very loose in her Discipline; and what greater Reflection can there be on a Church than this? What's an Army, a Kingdom, unless
 good

Of Confession and Absolution,

211

Sermon
VII.

good Order and Discipline be maintained in it? All Societies are upheld by it: And spiritual Governours have the same Obligation upon them, to look to this, and exact it of their Members, as other Governours of States and Kingdoms have, if they would have their Societies thrive and flourish. So that whatsoever can be said to the Praise and Commendation of Discipline in general, will hold Good of this; not only because 'tis a Branch of good Discipline, but such a Branch of it as renders all the Rest useful and significant. What are Church-censures without this? What avails it to expel Men the Church, if they be again admitted without giving evident Proofs of their Amendment and Reformation? This will shew a Church acted by Caprice, by Humour, and Partiality, rather than good Discipline. And therefore,

3. A Church consults not her own Honour nor Good in such an indulgent Proceeding. It is to the Honour of any Society or Body of Men, where good Education is profess'd, that it will not endure nor shelter vicious and disorderly Members in it, but either mends or ejects them. And the christian Church goes beyond all other Societies in her Profession of Strictness and

Sermon Purity of Living, as well she may, she having so much the Advantage of all others in the Excellency of her Precepts, Rules, Examples, and Assistances. But is it at all consonant to this, that she should endure within her Pale the worst and most corrupt Men? That she should own such for Members? No: You will say she ejects them! What is it ejects them? Is it her Holiness and Purity? What! and would not the same Holiness and Purity make her equally cautious of admitting such Men, appearing under the same evil Character both to her self and others? This will hardly set off the Holiness and Purity of any Church, hardly will Men believe that for their Vice such Persons were ejected, if they are again received without a visible Departure from it; if Money or any Thing else reconciles the to Church, without a real or an appearing Change of Life in the Absolved.

As this brings Dishonour to a Church, so, which is worse, to the Christian Religion it self; for those that are in the outward Communion of a Church, it is supposed, that Church acknowledges for Christians, and if such differ nothing from other Men, if they are rather more loose and scandalous than others in their Lives, it is needless almost to say under what a disadvantage

advantagious Character they will represent Christianity. And therefore, how earnestly and frequently doth the Apostle St. Paul press Christians to a strict Care about this? Sermon VII.

That they walk so as to give no Offence to such as are without; in every Thing adorning the Doctrine of our Lord and Saviour.

The contrary exposeth Christianity; the World generally, by a bad and false Logick, concluding of a Religion by its Professors, and charging the Faults of the Latter upon the Former.

A Church less, if possible, consults her Good than Honour, in such Remissness: By her Good I mean the Preservation of her own Members in the Purity of Faith and Practice; for a *little Leaven*, saith the Apostle, *leaveneth the whole Lump: Evil Communications corrupt good Manners:* And again, speaking of evil Doctrines, *they eat and spread like a Canker:* Common Sense instructs us to keep Infection as far off from us as possible, or at least not to receive it into our Bosom; if then we are infected, who are to be blamed but such as admitted it? I cannot stay long on these Particulars, which would very well bear further Enlargement; but one Thing I cannot but mention, and that is the evil Effect that the Observation of this Supineness and Looseness must naturally pro-

Sermon due, in Men of the same Communion;
 VII. when they see upon what slight and easy
 Terms the Excommunicated are again admitted, how cheaply their Peace is purchased, the short and easy Methods there are to Absolution, will they fear Church-censures? Will they value or dread Excommunication? On the other Hand, Will they not be tempted to turn it all into Ridicule? I shall only say, did humane Governours proceed thus, bring no Body to Shame or Punishment, make no Examples, the Effect would be very sensible, in the universal Disorder and Riot it would soon introduce.

4. Neither, in not Exacting good Proofs of Repentance, doth a Church better consult the spiritual Good and Welfare of such as she excommunicates. 'Tis true, indeed, the Church is frequently stiled our Mother, which is an Appellation importing great Tendernefs and Love; but yet is not this Love inconsistent with Correction, but is frequently best expressed and seen in it: As Affliction is a Mark of the Almighty's Love, because it aims at, and effects his Childrens Good, an unwearied Regard to which, is the best Instance and Demonstration of true Affection. But if the Church cannot endure to see her Sons under the least
 Pain

Pain or Uneasiness, she wants one notable Expedient to make them good, and that is Discipline; and perhaps when she sees and feels the bad Effects, like other natural Parents, it may repent her of her Overfondness.

Sermon
VII.

The End of Church-censures, St. Paul tells us, is to produce this Sorrow and Grief; this was the End of his Excommunicating this incestuous Person; *for the Destruction of the Flesh*, and that his open and publick Disgrace, and other bad Consequences of his Excommunication, might put a Stop to his Carreer, might revive in him Consideration, make him reflect on himself and Actions, and so shame and humble him, and put him on Prayer and Fasting, and other Methods, that in their own Nature, and more especially by the Grace of God, tend to subdue the inordinate Appetites arising from the Flesh, and to advance Reason to its proper Command and Jurisdiction over them. This Method, which withdraws the Fuel of Lust, gave Reason and Conscience Opportunity and Power to exert themselves, introduced Consideration and Reflection, which before lay unactive, and smothered in the Mists and Clouds of tumultuous Passions: And so he tells us again, in this very Case, *that godly Sorrow worketh Repentance not to be repented*

Sermon

VII.

*pent*ed of: From all which, we may easily observe, that the very Design of Excommunication, the End of God's Entrusting this Power with his Church, is to produce this Sorrow, which is not only a Fore-runner, but a powerful Means, of a Conversion and Amendment. And if a Church absolves or admits Members, without any Regard had to this Sorrow, or before it be produced, what doth she do but destroy the Design of her own Sentence, the End of this divine Institution, and so defeat Sinners of one excellent Means of Repentance and Change of Life?

And thus I have laid before you some of the Grounds upon which this primitive Discipline standeth, and they are such certainly as justify the primitive Fathers and Bishops in insisting upon it: Justify, did I say? Sure they go farther, they shew it their indispensable Duty.

The harder Task is yet behind, to induce such, whose Case it may be to comply with so seemingly harsh Terms of Admission, to judge them reasonable, and useful, and voluntarily to submit to them.

This is the 2^d Thing, to recommend this Practice: And if excommunicated Persons did consider, they would find it highly reasonable.

I. Their

I. Their present Condition requires it: Sermon VII.
 How light soever we make of being under the Sentence of Excommunication, how merry soever we may be about it, yet our being cut off from the Church by a lawful Authority, and for a lawful Cause, did we seriously consider, should appear no jesting Matter: We should rather mourn and weep, as the *Apostle* suggesteth, did we discern our own Condition and Danger. He expresses this by *being delivered over to Satan*, and in those early Times, such as before derided or scorned it, upon Experience, found it no light Calamity. Some extraordinary Judgment very frequently attended it; which, if now Excommunication should be destitute of, yet are there other Things in it that would greatly terrify and humble a Man of any Reflection. It is as plain as any Thing in the *New Testament*, that the Church hath Power of Anathematizing, of Binding or Loosing, and is it a light Thing to have our Sins bound upon us? And assuredly, we are bound in the Chains of our Sins, if the Church made a right Judgment and Sentence. To be cut off from all Christian Society, and avoided as an Infection, as the *Apostle* commands, and the ancient Christians practised; to be excluded the Prayers, the Sacrament, and all divine Ordinances,

Sermon dinances, those especial Means of Grace
 VII. and Salvation, Is not this a great Evil?

Would it not draw Tears from one that loved these Things, or his own Soul, to be denied them, to be accounted unworthy of them? To be cut off from the Church, Is not this a pitiful and a mournful State? For, What is the Church? It is the Body of Christ, says the Apostle; and to be cut off from the Church, is to be cut off from the Body of Christ; and consequently from all Relation to him, from all Assistance and Influence and Grace from him. So that this infers not only Non-forgiveness, but spiritual Death; for, howsoever we differ in our Notions about the true Church, and controvert which, and where she is, yet we all acknowledge there is such a Thing, and that there is no Salvation out of it; For, for *this* our Saviour prays, for *this* he shed his Blood, to *this* he promises his Grace and Assistance, *this* his Spirit rules and animates, and out of *this* there is no spiritual Life or Strength, but a Man is in the Condition of a Limb separated from the Body, or a Branch cut off from the Vine, lifeless and dead. And it will be extreamly hard for a Man to be able to perswade himself, that he is of the *invisible* Church of Christ, when

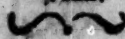
when the Visible has cut him off for notorious Crimes. Sermon VII.

The old Christians had better Notions of these Things than we, and consequently, it is no Wonder that such as were in this Condition, looked upon it as the most Miserable; that the Thoughts of it raised their Fears, Sorrow, and the most ardent Desires, Prayers, and Endeavours to get out of it. And that we have not the same Sense of it, is, surely, much owing to our Ignorance or Impiety.

2. Nothing less than publick Sorrow and Humiliation, the Course the Church enjoined, will denote true Repentance. True Repentance implieth, that we make all possible Reparation and Satisfaction for the Sins we have committed, or else will it not pass with God, although it may have the good Luck sometimes to pass with Men. If our Sins have been publick, and given Scandal and Offence to others, it is a sure Rule in Divinity that we should remove it, hinder the Effects of it by all possible Signs and Demonstrations of Repentance; or, in other Words, our Repentance should appear as remarkable, as open, as clear to the Eye and Observation of others, as our Wickedness hath been, that God may be glorified, and our Neighbour benefited as much,

Sermon

VII.



much, if possible, in our Conversion, as the One was dishonoured, and the Other misled, discouraged, and scandalized by our evil Practices; so that our Example may be never urged in Countenance and Patronage of impious Practices, nor any Stress laid on it; if and it did mislead, or help to support any in the same Course, that that Prop of Iniquity may fail them, and nothing be drawn from it but to the Advantage and Encouragement of Religion and Vertue. Therefore, says *Joshua*, in a Case of publick Scandal and Offence; *My Son, give Glory to the God of Israel, by making Confession of thy Sin.* If other Men know our Sin, they ought to know our Confession or Repentance likewise, if we would glorify God; and, next to Innocency, this open Sorrow and Humiliation brings Glory to God, because it leaves a publick Brand upon the Ways of Vice, in which God was dishonoured: The Pains, the Anguish, the Sorrows we express upon this Occasion, are a loud Testimony against Vice, proclaim the Badness of its Ways, and are of Example and Terror to others. True Religion, as well as the Saints above, triumpheth in every such Profelyte.

'Tis true, indeed, Men are commonly tender and delicate in Matters of this Nature, because of the Shame it exposes them to;

to; but was there no Shame or Dishonour in publicly committing such Crimes? then were Men certainly exposing themselves under the most ignominious Character and Appearance to others; and those ingenuous Signs of true Repentance, instead of bringing on them any new Disgrace, wipe away their old Stains, and recover their Reputation and Character.

But how little will true Repentance value Shame, when Vertue, and Religion, and the Honour of God are promoted by it. *St. Paul* was a very great Persecutor, and did Shame prevent him from owning it? How doth he publish and blazon it throughout the World! King *David* committed a Sin of a very complicated and heinous Nature, and upon true Repentance did he go about to extenuate or conceal it from others Knowledge? How often, and in what Strains hath he published it? It is needless to mention *St. Peter*, and other Examples of true Repentance in sacred Writ, who were under no such Tenderness of confessing their Faults, but rather seemed more careful to insert and publish *these* than their *Vertues*. And who doth not now esteem them the truer Penitents, the better and honefter Men for it? I come

Sermon VII. In the *Third and last Place*, to draw some general Reflections, or Corollaries from the Whole, by Way of Application. And

2d admission
-mission
I. From this Account of the publick Sorrow and Confession that the primitive Church exacted from her excommunicated Members, in order to their Readiness, it is easy to form a Notion both of the *Original* and *Absurdity* of what the Church of Rome termeth *auricular Confession*: By which that Church understandeth a *private* Confession, or Enumeration of our several Sins to a *particular* Priest or Confessor. And this Practice she urgeth upon her Members, not as a Matter of Prudence, when under great Difficulties, Entanglements, or Stings of Conscience, in order to spiritual Direction or Comfort; for what Protestant Church would differ with her about this? Not ours, I am sure: But her Fault is, her Imposing it as a Sacrament, her making it absolutely necessary to Forgiveness, so that if we do not enumerate every particular Sin to our Confessor, it will be bound upon us, because not known to him, and consequently not forgiven by him. This creates, what they term Confessors, a great deal of Work in the *Roman* Church, and indeed makes this Business of

Con-

Confessing, a good Part of the Religion of *Sermon*
private Men. *VII.*

But how is it the *Roman Church* establishes such a Practice, and passes it off as so absolutely necessary upon her Members? Is there any Authority for it in the Word of God, or any good Precedent of it in the primitive Church? As for the Word of God, which Protestants are very troublesome in demanding, in such Cases, it yieldeth such Texts as these; As, when the Leper was cleansed, *Go, shew thy self to the Priest.* And again, *Confess your Sins one to another Brethren.* Are not these close and home to the Point? Do they not firmly establish auricular Confession? And yet, when you have heard a Text or two more about *binding* and *loosing*, and the Power of the Keys granted to *St. Peter*, you have heard all they can muster up from this Quarter.

As they manage Scripture, so do they the Fathers, and urge them with as much Effect. In every Place where the *Roman Commentators* meet with *Exhomologesis* or Confession, which they very frequently do in those Writings, they, in a Sort of Transport, cry out, here is *auricular* Confession: And yet, a Line or two after shew it, as clear as the Sun, to be meant of quite another Thing, generally of this publick Confes-

Sermon Confession that Penitents exprefs'd before
 VII. the Church, of which I have been treating. In which Case they confirm an old
 Observation, that the Mind is capable of
 the same Sort of Tinctures and Prejudices
 as the Eye; for as, to this Sense when
 diseased look where it will, all Things appear
 yellow, or green, according to the
 Humour prevailing in it; so a strong Imagination
 of auricular Confession being imprinted in the
 Minds of these Men, they discern it every where
 in the *Bible*, and *Fathers*, when no-body else can see *there* any
 Thing like it.

From whence this auricular Confession
 took its Rise is very plain. The *Roman*
 was once a pure and holy *Church*, and the
 Protestants Charge against her is, That she
 hath innovated, blended, and corrupted the
 Truth; and as, in other Points, this can be
 evidently made Good, so in this; here she
 hath altered a very wise and wholesome
 Branch of Discipline, founded on Scripture
 and primitive Usage, hath changed *publick*
 into *private* Confession, a divine Institution
 into an absurd Conceit of her own. It is
 true, indeed, she lay under Temptation to
 it, for real Discipline, publick Sorrow and
 Confession, is grievous to Flesh and Blood;
 no Wonder, therefore, that corrupt Nature
 seeketh a more easy Way; and early this
 bad

bad Propensity shewed it self even in St. Cy-
prian's Days; in which Men attempted to
get into the Church by private Confessions
and Absolutions, from particular Presby-
ters, rather than by publick Humiliation,
by Absolution of the Bishop, in the Sight,
and with the Concurrence and Approba-
tion of the whole Church. The Zeal and
Courage of this Father, in Conjunction
with the *Roman* Bishops and Clergy, stem'd
this Corruption then; but afterwards the
People got their Point, by making Abso-
lution more easy to themselves, and more
advantagious to the Priest. For now, every
Presbyter is intrusted with the Keys to
open or shut, bind or loose, to use them as
he pleases: How he uses them no-body
knows, it being all transacted privately, in
which there is Room for great Corruption:
And this Suspicion will be greatly increas-
ed, when it is considered, with what Ri-
gour this private Confession is exacted, so
that without it is no Pardon, howsoever
sincere and hearty our Confession may be
before God. Doth not this seem to make
the Confessor, instead of being the *Instru-*
ment of God, the *principal* Dispenser of
Grace and Pardon, as if he was invested
with all? And whither doth this naturally
lead? Certainly to make Men believe, if
they are confessed and absolved by their

Sermon Confessor, all is well, to depend upon tham
 VII Pardons, and convert true Humiliation,
 Sorrow, and Repentance towards God, into
 a private, a slight, a cursory Confession to
 Man. This our Reformers thought, with as
 great Piety as Reason, and I hope we shall
 ever be of the same Opinion.

2. This Discourse should deeply affect
 us with the miserable Condition of some
 Men among us, who, notwithstanding bap-
 tized into the christian Church, seldom ap-
 pear in it, not because they are prohibited
 by any judicial Act or Sentence of the
 Church, but out of mere disregard and con-
 tempt of its Ordinances. The old Chri-
 stians thought it a dismal Case, we see, to
 be cut off from the christian Church; and
 of the same Opinion were the Excommu-
 nicated themselves, and deplored and la-
 mented it exceedingly; and, as for other
 Reasons, so, because it deprived them of
 the Participation of our blessed Saviour's
 Body and Blood, and other divine Ordi-
 nances; But here are Men who have so
 little Sense of Excommunication, so little
 Regard to the Church and divine Ordi-
 nances, that they absent, they excommu-
 nicate themselves. And which are in the
 worst Case, either such as are absent out of
 Necessity, or such as are absent out of
 Choice;

Choice; either such as greatly value, dearly love, earnestly desire, and aspire after the Communion of the Church, or such as have no Sense of these Things, despise and condemn both the Church and its Ordinances? According to the Doctrines of those Times, * the Latter were a great deal the * St. Cyp.
worst Men; and that whether they shun'd de Unitat.
the Church out of schismatical Principles, Eccl. p.
or meer Looseness and Profaneness, 301.

Lastly, Hence we cannot but reflect upon, I might say, lament the strange Misapprehension and Looseness that these latter Ages, yea, that the Members of our Church, of our own excellent Church, as we justly call it, have imbibed, touching Discipline in general, and more particularly this Branch of it. I have represented unto you, under what Sorrow Men antiently lay when cut off from the christian Church, what a grievous Sense they had of it: Did ever any Man in our Days see an excommunicated Person entertain this Opinion of it? See any one in Sorrow and Tears about it? This would be a Sight indeed! and most Men, I doubt, would as much condemn the Weakness and Folly of such a Behaviour, as the old Christians did the contrary. What? Go mourning and lamenting for being excommunicated. Who thinks himself

Sermon the worse Man for this? Who avoids or
 VII. shuns him? It is rather Matter of Mirth
 and Jest, than any serious Reflection with
 others; and all the Evil apprehended in it
 is the Cost, and other temporal Inconve-
 niences it involves Men in: Men may
 mourn for this, indeed, but this is not the
 Sorrow the Apostle proposed to excite by
 it, but the godly Sort of Sorrow *that leadeth*
to Repentance.

The Causes of this general Inapprehen-
 sion in Christians, of all Sorts, in Opposi-
 tion to the Commands of God, the primi-
 tive Practice, and sound Sense, I will not
 pretend to suggest, neither the Remedies to
 so universal, so great an Evil: Both these
 vastly exceed my Sphere and Capacity, are
 a Work to which none is equal but a Con-
 vocation: And should a Convocation, at
 any Time, undertake such a Thing, what
 wise good Churchman would blame it? I
 am sure if they did, they would be wiser
 than the Church it self, or the Reformers
 of it, which complains of and laments this
 very Thing; her Want of this godly, and
 primitive Discipline: And if it was bad
 then, it is not better since. All I shall say
 is, That according to the best of my Abi-
 lity, with all the Sincerity and Impartiali-
 ty, I am capable of, I have laid before you
 the old Practice in this Point, to which,
 whe-

whether we are conformable or not, and want Amendment or not, you your selves are Judges. To conclude, for the Present, until this Sort of Discipline be restored, there is one Way however, whereby neither we our selves, nor the Church, may greatly suffer in the Want of it, and that is, out of a Principle of pure Ingenuity, and Love to God, and his Laws, as true and ingenuous Sons of the Church, that we so live and demean our selves, as to stand in no Need of Discipline and Correction; be we good without it, and so render this Power of the Church extreamly needless, or at least not so much missed as it must be otherwise.

Sermon
VII.
~



whether we are comfortable or not, and whether we want Amendment or not, you yourselves are Judges. To conclude for the Present, until this sort of Discipline be restored, there is one Way however, whereby neither we our selves, nor the Church, may greatly suffer in the Want of it, and that is, our of a Principle of pure Ingenuity, and Love to God, and his Laws, as true and ingenious Sons of the Church, that we so live and do, as to stand in need of no Discipline and Correction; be we good without it, and so render this Power of the Church extremely needless, or at least not much injured as it may be otherwise.



SERMON VIII.

Of the ERRORS of the Church
of ROME.

MARK VII. 9.

*And he said unto them, full well ye reject
the Commandment of God, that ye may
keep your own Tradition.*

AT the Time of our Blessed Sa-
viour's appearing in human
Nature, the Jewish Church was
rent into many Parties and
Sects, of which the most po-
tent and considerable was the Pharisees,
whose Founder was Hillel, a Man greatly
eminent for Austerity of Life, which his

Sermon

VIII.

Disciples much improved; and to justify themselves herein, pretended oral Tradition: That is, although these Customs and outward Observances, in which the Essence of their Sect consisted, were not indeed to be found in the Books of *Moses*; yet, they were delivered by Word of Mouth by the same great *Prophet*, and as strictly enjoined, and from one Age to another had been transmitted down infallibly to them; so that the Original and Authority of these Doctrines was the same, though the Conveyance was different, one by Writing, the other by Word of Mouth, and no Man ought to dispute or disobey one more than the other. Thus *Pharisaism* consisting in *Holding the Tradition of the Elders*, and this being a weak Place in their System, as it is very natural, all their Zeal was employed about this; and they held it so very fast indeed, that they would sooner part with the Word of God than It. Thus this superstitious and extravagant Sect blindly fulfilled that Prophecy of *Esaïas* concerning the *Jewish Church* in the latter Days, that it should teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men; that their Religion should dwindle into gross and fulsome Hypocrisie, into meer Freaks of human Fancy and Conceit, and that these should be incul-

inculcated instead of the divine Laws and Precepts, Sermon
VIII.

What befall the *Jewish Church* hath exactly and literally befallen the *Christian*, and it is beyond all Controversy clear, that the *Roman Church* hath trod in the self-same Footsteps, hath admitted the same Corruption, and in the self-same Words, even oral Tradition, and defends it with equal Heat and Zeal; and as this, in the *Jewish Church*, when lifted up to that Height and Eminency, as to stand upon a Level with sacred Scripture, soon depress'd its Competitor beneath it self, would endure no Rival, but as our Saviour says, soon render'd it of none Effect; the same oral Tradition has effected for the *Roman Church*: It has the Impudence to confront divine Authority, and has reduced it to a meer Name and Title, without any real Influence or Effect. In all Matters of direct Opposition, its Words and Commands pass for nothing, and it is never heard but when it can be forced to speak to its own Dishonour, to the Advancement of Tradition, and the Destruction of itself. What Wonder that such a pestilent Principle should have the self-same pestilent Effects, should introduce such Error, Superstition, and Hypocrisy into both Churches.

Being

Sermon
VIII.

Being therefore to consider the Errors of the *Roman Church* (because I cannot propose to speak to them all) I shall speak to *that* from whence they all flow, and *that* I take to be the Quitting *Scripture* as the supreme *Rule of Faith*, and Setting up this vain *Idol, oral Tradition*, in its Room and Place.

In treating of which, for the greater Clearness and Perspicuity, I shall observe this Method :

First, I shall briefly shew you, what is here meant by *oral Tradition*.

Secondly, I shall state the Question, and Point of Difference in this Dispute, between us and the *Roman Church*.

Thirdly, I shall shew you, That the Pretensions of the *Roman Church* for *oral Tradition's* being the *Rule of Faith*, in Opposition to the *written Word*, are vain and groundless.

Fourthly and Lastly, I shall draw some Inferences from the Whole. Of these as briefly as possible.

First, I am to shew you, what is here meant by *oral Tradition*.

Now

Now *Tradition*, in general, signifies the Sermon Delivering, or Teaching, of any Sort of *Doctrines*, whether by Writing, or by Word of Mouth. Thus it frequently signifies, with the best and most ancient *Fathers*, the true and orthodox *Faith*. When they had to deal with *Hereticks*, they would call in *apostolical Tradition*, as might be shewn from many Places. The *Doctrines*, or more properly *Fables*, that the *Hereticks* invented, cannot be true, say they, because they are contrary to *apostolical Tradition*. In which Sense, 'tis plain, *Tradition* is not exclusive of Writing, and, in Truth, signifies no more than *apostolical Doctrine*. VIII.

The *Roman Church* hath restrain'd the Word to a narrower Sense and Meaning, and with them it signifies *oral Teaching*, or *Teaching by Word of Mouth*. And in this Sense too, I deny not, but the *Fathers* have sometimes used the Word; but, directly contrary to the Purpose of the *Roman Church*: For, when *Hereticks* then pretended, as the *Roman Church* doth now, that the *Scripture* contained not all necessary Points of *Faith* and *Practice*, and so they were not to be convicted of false *Doctrine* out of *Scripture*, they referring to secret *Tradition* for them, and upon this grounding them; we shall try the Strength of this Pretence presently, said the *Fathers*, by Appeal.

Sermon Appealing to the Churches which the *Apo-*
VIII. *stles* themselves established. If they own
 no such Doctrines, but abominate them,
 they must be meer Fictions, the Product of
 extravagant Brains, and no ways derive
 themselves from the Apostles; when both
 the Scripture, the Churches which the Apo-
 stles founded, and with whom these Tradi-
 tions are pretended to be lodged, disclaim,
 and renounce them. In which, *Scripture*
 is not given up as an insufficient Rule, as
 the *Roman Doctors* loudly boast, but the
 contrary; so that the Pretences of Tradi-
 tion are confuted even with their own Wea-
 pons. But to return to the *Roman Church*.

'Tis their Conceit, that many Doctrines,
 of absolute Necessity to Salvation, were
 taught the first Christians by the *Apostles*,
 and which they never committed to Wri-
 ting; which *Doctrines* were again taught
 others, and so descended down pure and
 uncorrupt from one *Age* and Time to
 another, even to the present *Age* and *Pope*;
 and these *unwritten Doctrines* all Men are
 bound to believe, under as great Penalties
 as the written Word, or any Thing con-
 tained in it; even under the Penalty of
 eternal Damnation. Some of these Do-
 ctrines the *Church of Rome* hath been plea-
 sed to define, in these latter Ages, (and
 how many more there may be yet behind,
 Who

Who can tell ?) and at last commit to Writing, and they are such as these, *Purgatory, Transubstantiation, Indulgences, Worshipping God by Images, Praying to Saints*, and the like : And if you find none of these *Doctrines* in *Scripture*, no nor in the *primitive Fathers*, you are not at all to marvel, for they came down by *Tradition*, were taught by *Word of Mouth*, and were believed in all Ages by the Faithful, although never written ; and they had good Grounds for this *oral Tradition*, if you will believe them, being as safe a Way of conveying the *Apostles Doctrine*, as *Scripture*, or any Writing whatsoever. At first Sight, what an absurd Account, or Tale is this ? and, How blind must Men be, not to see the Grossness of it ? To proceed to

The *Second Particular*, to State the Question, and Point of Difference in this Dispute between us and the *Roman Church*. We, and all *Protestants* affirm and maintain, that the written *Word of God* is the supreme Rule of Faith and Practice, from whence are to be learnt all Things necessary to be believed and practised, in order to eternal Life, and by which all *Doctrines* and *Practices* are to be tried and judged. Such as agree to this Rule are to be retained, such as dissent from, or contradict it to

Sermon to be rejected. This is the Ground and
VIII Foundation of all *Protestants*, in which they
 all agree, howsoever they differ in other
 Things; I say all, unless you will esteem
 some *Protestants* that hold the Dictates of
 the *Spirit*, a Light and Rule superior to
Scripture: If so, I must except them; but
 of the Rest I am sure.

The *Roman Church* confesseth the *Scriptures* to be inspired, and infallibly true, as far as they go, and that is but a little Way without Tradition; they contain not all Things to be believed and practised, but what they want, Tradition supplies; so that if we believe and practise only what *Scripture* contains, both our *Faith* and *Practice* will be imperfect, both will be by halves: So that, in this Question, we are not bound to prove the *Scripture* the *Word of God*; for that is granted: Neither to consider or examine into the Reasons and Motives, why we believe it the Word of God; although a Question in another Case of a momentous Nature, yet here foreign to the Purpose: But we are to consider precisely *this*, and supposing the *Scripture* to be the Word of God, and we believe it to be so, whether it contains all Articles of *Faith* and Matters of *Practice*: If so, it is a perfect compleat Rule, and Tradition is excluded, and we have nothing
 to

to do with it ; but its Pretences are unjust Sermon
and impious, derogatory to the Honour of **VIII.**
Scripture and the *Christian Faith*. 

This is therefore the *Third Thing*, to shew you that the Pretensions of the *Roman Church* for *oral Tradition's* being the *Rule of Faith*, in Opposition to the *written Word*, are vain and groundless. And here do many Things suggest themselves of great Weight ; but I shall study Brevity, as much as possible.

And here, at first Sight, I think, the Experience of all Ages and all Men, lies against Tradition's being a safe Way of transmitting to Posterity any *Doctrines* pure and uncorrupt, and especially the Doctrine of the Apostles. A few Years, without mighty Care and constant Recollection, will much deface, in the same Man, the Memory of Things ; and therefore, if it be about Matters one would exactly retain, Experience teaches every Man to commit them to Writing, as the surest Way of preserving them entirely ; and if this be the Case even with respect to Things, that we actually saw, heard or knew ; if we can hardly trust our own Memories about such Things for a few Years, but have recourse to Writing as a more sure and faithful Keeper of them, What strange Confidence is it,

Sermon

VIII.



it, to pretend, that *Doctrines* and Matters of Fact are likely, this Way, to be preserved pure, and uncorrupt for many Hundreds of Years? *Doctrines* too, that Men are most willing to forget, most prone to alter, adulterate, and misrepresent; because of the Contradiction they bear to their worldly Interest, to their natural Inclinations and Lusts; *Doctrines* that *Men* and *Devils* are concerned to suppress: That such *Doctrines* as these should run pure and uncorrupt for so many Ages, through so many Letts and Impediments, through so many dirty Channels, and that Writing should not more securely convey them, is a Proposition only fit to be asserted by the *Roman Church*, which deals much in Contradictions, and, upon other Occasions, can oppose the clear Evidence of all their Faculties, of their Senses, and their Reason.

But have they nothing to say to such monstrous Assertions? Yes, their Doctors pertly ask, Was not the *true Religion*, under the *Patriarchs*, preserved and delivered down by Tradition? True, How this Way it was preserved, all Men see: When it came into many Hands, and was represented by different Men, a few Years so mangled and defaced it, that scarce the most blind and obscure Footsteps of it remained: And that it was preserved in the *Patriarchs* them-

themselves, was much owing to their long *Sermon*
Lives, and much more to *supernatural Re-*
velation, which these *Patriarchs* enjoyed, *VIII.*
whereby, being preserved sound in their
Morals and *Worship*, they had no Byass on
their Wills, which might incline them ei-
ther to forget or deprave these great Facts,
the *Creation* and *Deluge*; but rather became
extreamly zealous and careful of transmit-
ting them pure and entire to Posterity, they
being the great Grounds and Motives of
their *Worship* and *Religion*. And that true
Religion was preserved even in so few
Hands, must be deemed miraculous: So
that this is as bad a Plea for Tradition, as
can be, unless we could be assured that all
the Members in the *Roman Church* concern-
ed in delivering *Traditions* were as long Li-
vers, as honest and good Men, as the Pa-
triarchs, had as great Advantages both na-
tural and supernatural, as great Security
from Error by Revelation, as the Patri-
archs had; we might believe their *Tradi-*
tions then, but not before. 'Tis true, This
they say too. And what may not Men say,
that say, they have *Infallibility* either in
the *Pope*, or *Council*, or somewhere among
them? They say this, but alas! the Proof
hereof is a hard Point, as hard, I do verily
believe, as to prove, that some of their
Popes have lived to the Age of *Methusalem*,

Sermon and hence were as capable Conveyers of
 VIII. Tradition, as the Patriarchs. And they
 may as well say, and as easily prove the
 One as the Other, especially after the dismal
 Account which some of their most zealous
Doctors give of the Lives of some of
 their *Popes*, which were so very bad, that
 they fear whether several of them success-
 fully were not damned. A likely Busi-
 ness, that such Men should be priviledged
 beyond all Men with Infallibility!

But so it is: *Tradition* is propt up; but
 with what? *Their Infallibility*. This needs
 a good Support too, or else it must all tum-
 ble: For, for certain, here is great Weight,
Tradition, *Transubstantiation*, *Indulgences*,
Purgatory, and many other heavy Things.
 In a Word, all the goodly Frame of the Ro-
 man Universal Catholick Church laid upon it.
 But how this stands, will be seen hereafter:
 For the present I shall proceed.

Secondly, It seems a strong and irrefraga-
 ble Argument for *Scripture's* being the Rule
 of Faith, in Opposition to *Tradition*, in that
 our Saviour here so upbraids the *Pharisees*
 for this very Thing, for advancing *Tradi-
 tion* in Opposition to the written Word. Full
 well ye reject the Commandment of God, that
 ye may keep your own Tradition. In which
 Opposition is very evidently implied, that
 the

the Commandments of God were only to be found in the *Scriptures*, and consequently that *Tradition* contained no such Thing as *divine Precepts*, but only *human Conceits*; and to look for *Commandments of God* in *Tradition* was absurd and impious. So that what would these Men have? Will the Authority of our *Saviour* content them? If it will, here is the very Question, and the Decision of it likewise; and it is determined for *Scripture*, that this is the only *Rule of Faith*; and to look for *Articles of Faith* in *Tradition*, is as preposterous a Thing, as to look for the Living amongst the Dead. It is here said, as plain as Words can make it, that nothing but the *Divine Writ* can be of *Divine Authority*.

VIII.

'Tis true, this Decision is given directly in Regard to the *Jewish Church*; yet, it affords the highest Presumption, for the *Scripture's* being the *Rule of Faith* to *Christians* also; both because there seem more *Passages of Scripture*, that favour the *Infallibility* of the *High Priest* and *Sanhedrim*, than can be produced for the *Infallibility* of the *Pope*, or any Number of *Christians* whatsoever. And yet, it seems, all this signifies nothing; the *Jews* were still to adhere to *Scripture*, and the advancing *Tradition* to the same Authority with it was an impious Thing; and why should not *Scripture* be

Sermon
VIII.

as good, and *Tradition* as bad and impious a Thing, under the *Christian* as the *Jewish Religion*? And especially, if it be considered likewise, that the very same Person that thus highly extols *Scripture*, and decries *Tradition* in the *Jewish Church*, was the *Head, Author and infallible Director* of the *Christian Church* too. And that *Tradition* should be so vile a Thing in one *Church*, and yet so excellent good and infallible a Thing in another, will never be believed, unless the same Person had expressly told us that the *Jewish* and *Christian Church*, in this respect, were to be different: And although the *Pharisees* were bad Men, for erecting it in One; yet others were to be commended, that introduced it in the Other. If any such Difference had been made between the *Jewish* and the *Christian Church*, possibly *Tradition* might have stood with *Scripture*, although still it would have been a strange Thing, why our *Saviour* should so severely condemn *Tradition* in the *Jewish Church*, and commend it in the *Christian*? Why in the One it should be so unnecessary, yea, mischievous a Principle, and yet so necessary, so good in the Other.

Thirdly, It seems notoriously plain, that the Writers of the *New Testament* themselves thought

thought the *Scriptures* to be the *Rule* of *Sermon Faith* and *Practice*, not before they were written (for that would be a strange Supposition) although this is a mighty Argument with the *Roman Church* for *Tradition*, that the *Scriptures* were not immediately pen'd, and then *Tradition* was the only Guide. And if, say they, it was so then; why not since? By no Means: For the Difference is wide and obvious. There is no great Difficulty sure to discern, that the *Scripture* could not be a *Rule*, or any Thing, till it was written: And as for *Tradition*, it might indeed do, while the *Apostles* were living, tho' then but lamely; for in the *Apostles* absence from any Church, for Want of Writing, *Tradition* was soon corrupted or forgot; as appears by the *Apostles* themselves; which soon engaged them to secure the true *Faith* by Writing, which is not much to the Honour of *Tradition*. But to return to the Point, what the *Apostles* thought of their own *Writings*, when they had published them.

St. Paul discourses of *Scripture* in general in such a Strain, as if he apprehended it the only *infallible Rule*, a compleat and sufficient Direction. It was all given forth by *Inspiration*, and was *profitable* to all pious Purposes, contain'd Directions for all Cases, and, in a Word, was *able to make a Man*

Sermon *wise to Salvation*, yea perfect, if he would
 VIII. follow it. What? without Tradition? so it
 seems. And this is the more remarkable,
 because it was spoken by one, that once
 was a furious *Pharisee*, exceeding *zealous* for
 the *Tradition of the Elders*; and yet now,
 not one Word for *Tradition*. What can this
 mean, but that the *Spirit*, that now direct-
 ed him, owned no such Thing, but entire-
 ly rejected it? All I infer is, that only Scri-
 pture is here commended, which, from one
 once a *zealous Pharisee*, makes bad for *Tra-
 dition*.

Although this be directly spoken of the
Scriptures of the Old Testament, yet it is
 not exclusive of the *New*; for the Writings
 of *St. Paul*, *St. Peter* calls *Scripture* likewise,
 and makes it as damnable to pervert them,
 as those of the *Old*; which must imply
 them equally *Inspired and Divine*. But
 still we want any such Commendations of
Tradition.

But what I principally intend is, The
Evangelists must surely understand their own
 Ends and Intentions in writing a History
 of our *Saviour's Life and Doctrine*; and
 they expressly tell us, what their Ends
 were. The Motive of *St. Luke's Writing*,
 he tells us, was this. *It seemed good to me
 also, having had perfect Understanding of all
 Things from the very First, to write to thee, in
 order,*

order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the Certainty of those Things, wherein thou hast been instructed. From hence, I think, it is most clear, *First*, That St. Luke knew all Things necessary to Salvation; they are his own Words, that he had perfect Understanding of all Things from the very *First*; and, *Secondly*, That his Gospel contained all these necessary Points; for it is said, at the first Verse, that it contains the Things that are most surely believed among us; and again he wrote, That Theophilus and all Men might know the Certainty of those Things in which they had been instructed: Which, sure, must be the Sum of what the Apostles taught, that is, all Things necessary to Salvation: Which, if so, there is no Room for Tradition, and traditionary Doctrines are in vain pretended; and especially, if we admit of what the Ancients say, That this Gospel of St. Luke was dictated, or at least approved of St. Paul, and of this he means, when he says, according to my Gospel: And if this be true, St. Luke's Gospel must contain the Substance of the Apostle's preaching, that is, all Things necessary to Salvation. So again, St. John acquaints us with his End and Intent of publishing a Gospel. He pretends not that all Things that Jesus said or did were therein contained; no, the World it self would not contain it all, but

Sermon *these Things are written that ye might believe,*
 VIII. *and believing might have Life through his*
 Name. What can such Expressions signify, but the Fulness and Sufficiency of the Writings of *Scripture*? And indeed, why, otherwise, do the Writers of *our Saviour's* Life, the *Evangelists*, set forth this in the Title of their Work, and call it the *Gospel of our Saviour*? Can it answer this Title, or did they duly perform their Undertaking, if they omitted Things as necessary to be known, of *our Saviour* or *his Doctrine*, as any they inserted? Sure it would be esteemed a very lame and imperfect Performance in the Writers of Lives, should they omit Facts of altogether as important a Nature, concerning the Men they would make known to Posterity, as those that they committed to Writing. And if this be inconsistent with common Sense and Prudence, much more with divine Inspiration. And if this be true of one of the *Gospels*, how much more of all, and of the several *Epistles* added to them? It follows, *a fortiori*, that the whole *New Testament*, instead of being deficient, and scanty, and wanting of Direction, is abounding in it.

Fourthly and Lastly, The Falseness of the *Roman Traditions* is even demonstrated from the direct Opposition they have to the *Word*
 of

of God. The Roman Church owns the Sermon Truth and Infallibility of the Word of God; only she pretends, that there are Truths necessary to be believed, not contained in it; but yet such as are contained in it are infallibly true and divine, and necessary to be believed in order to eternal Life: And this is enough to demonstrate the Falsehood of their Traditions. For the Scriptures being own'd the Word of God and infallibly true, that cannot be true that openly and directly contradicts the Scriptures, unless God can contradict himself; but the Roman Traditions most grossly and evidently contradict the Scripture: For the Scripture, in plain and direct Words, affirms, that Prayer ought to be performed in a known Tongue; but the Doctrine and Practice of the Roman Church is otherwise. The Scripture forbids, in direct Terms, the Use of Images in divine Worship; Tradition vouches and upholds them in the Roman Church. Scripture is clear and plain against praying to Saints and Angels, and says, that *there is but one Mediator between God and Man*; the Roman Church, relying upon Tradition, teaches and requires her Members to apply to them, and almost every Man has his tutelar Saint; and how the Virgin Mary is esteemed, addressed to, and deified, their Mass-Book shews. St. Paul
prophe-

Sermon prophesying of the Degeneracy of the *Christian Church*, among other Things, mentions the denying Men to marry, as a clear Mark of *Antichrist*: This very Thing the *Roman Church* does, in the Vertue of Tradition. More Instances might be given, but these are enough to shew, that if the *Scriptures* are true, the *Roman Traditions* must be false; and a Man can no more adhere both to Scripture and Tradition, than he can serve two such Masters as God and Mammon. Thus; what the *Pharisees* did of old, doth the *Roman Church* evidently now, make the Word of God of none Effect through Tradition; make its Precepts insignificant, and ineffectual.

As this demonstrates the Vanity of this Pretence of Tradition, so no less that of the Infallibility of their Church; into which it is at last resolved: For the *Scripture* is infallibly true; so both they, and we: But the *Roman Church* holds Doctrines directly contrary to *Scripture*; Therefore the *Roman Church* not only may, but hath, and doth, in Fact, err; or God may contradict himself: But we may not impute Contradictions to God, nor Errors to the *Scripture*: It must rest therefore on the *Roman Church*. I proceed to the Inferences, and Improvements of this Discourse.

And,

And, *First*, Hence it is evident, That the Sermon
Scriptures are plain, and uncorrupt in all VIII.
Things necessary to Salvation. 

Ist, I say plain. Otherwise they would not answer the End and Intent of a Rule, which is to try, and measure, and judge, and conclude other Things by it. But this could not be, unless it were clear and intelligible in it self. It could never afford Light and Decision about other Matters, if its own Sense were as dark and disputable as any. And this will be very certain, if it be certain that *Scripture* is intended by God as a Rule of *Faith* and *Practise*, and that I think is plain.

But the Thing rests not altogether here, but even on so solid a Foundation, as the *Attributes* of God; for the Scriptures being intended to transmit to Posterity the Doctrines of our *Saviour* (from many Reasons we being sure of this) What a strange Thing would it be; How grossly inconsistent with the Goodness and Wisdom of God, that the Scriptures should not deliver these Doctrines plainly and intelligibly, in such a Manner as Men may understand them? It is enough to say, that this would mar the very Design of *Christianity*, and the *Redemption* of the *World* by our *Saviour*, which is represented a Work of infinite Goodness and
Wisdom,

Sermon VIII. Wisdom, which yet, as good and wise a Work as it is, would all come to nothing, and signify nothing, if the *Scriptures* in necessary Points were unintelligible. For what Remedy could there be to this Evil? It appears not at all, that *Tradition*, or the *Infallibility* of any *Pope*, or *Council*, or *private Spirit*, could help us out here, and consequently we must remain unavoidably ignorant, as to the Terms of Salvation; and this had been all one, as if there never had been any such Thing as *Salvation*, or the *Redemption* of the World at all, if the *Scriptures*, which were intended to teach and inform us in those Matters, speak so darkly and unintelligibly, as to inform us in nothing certainly about them. As sure, therefore, as the *Christian Religion* is divine, and came from *God*, and as sure as *God* is a wise and good Being, and could never suffer so great and good an End as the *Redemption* of the World to miscarry, through a Failure of the Means to bring it down to us; I say, as sure as all this is true, the *Scripture*, which is this Means of Conveyance, speaks clearly of all Things, wherein *God* requires our express Belief and Practice, under Pain of Damnation. And hence it appears likewise, that the Noise the *Roman Doctors* make, touching obscure and dark Passages in *Scripture*, to introduce an *infallible Interpreter*,

preter, and *Tradition*, is empty and groundless. For the *Scriptures* being proved the *Rule of Faith*, and consequently, in all necessary Points, intelligible; it follows undeniably, that these dark and obscure Passages, of whose Sense we cannot be certain with our utmost Industry and Application, can contain no *necessary Truths* or *Articles*, such as are necessary to be expressly known, and believed in order to *Salvation*. For we believe, and, as we think, with the highest Reason, that had they been necessary to be known and believed, and had God intended to require the express Knowledge and Belief of them from all Mankind, on Pain of Damnation, they had certainly been more clearly revealed; unless Men may be condemned, by a just and good Being, for not knowing and believing Things, that they had no Means of knowing or believing; or for not knowing the Will of God farther than he hath revealed it.

No less, 2dly, is hence the *Purity* of the present *Scriptures* demonstrable, I mean, in Matters necessary to *Salvation*. *Atheists* and *Deists* on one Side, with all their Wit, endeavour to expose and invalidate the *Scripture*, from the Ways whereby some of its *Books* were admitted into the *Canon*, as inspired

Sermon
VIII

spired and divine; and the Roman Church on the other Side, amazes us with long Tales about the Errors of Transcribing, the various Readings of Manuscripts, the Knavery of Hereticks, &c. The First do it, to destroy all Religion, to clear the World of Priests and Priest-craft, and the troublesome Fears of invincible Powers, which, they tell us, miserably enslave the Minds of Men. The Latter, to confound Protestantism, and make Way for the Belief of her own Infalibility, as the only Thing to rid us of our Uncertainties and Perplexities. But, in Opposition to all this, whether from Atheists or Romanists, let Councils never so much wrangle, let Hereticks be never so great Knaves, let the Readings be never so various, the Purity of Scripture will still remain demonstrable in all necessary Points, in all Matters that God will exact the Belief and Practice of, at the Day of Judgment. And this will be plain to every Man that believes the Being of God, and the Truth of the Christian Religion; which Principles, although Atheists and Deists deny, yet ought they here to be supposed; because there can be no arguing about any Thing's being the Word of God, unless the Being of a God be admitted: And, accordingly, in such Sort of Reflections on Scripture, as that it is corrupt, and the like, although they believe

lieve perhaps neither God nor Christianity, yet they suppose both. Admitting, therefore, these Principles, the Being of God, and the Truth of Christianity, all this Talk about Errors in Transcribing, about Forgery, Interlining, &c. is empty and ridiculous; because if any Thing conveys to us truly the Doctrines of Christianity, 'tis the Scripture, this has infinitely the fairest Title to the Rule of Faith; and yet, as I before said, if, through Design or any other Way, the Scriptures be, in necessary Points, corrupted, if any one Doctrine or Article of Faith, necessary to Salvation, be lost, the whole Intent and End of the Gospel is defeated, and Men (which I dread to say) are in the self-same State, as if they never had been redeemed; so that it would be, in Truth, much fairer in Men, roundly to assert the Christian Religion to be false, than pick Quarrels with the Scripture: And I know not whether it would not be a less silly Thing to suppose the Christian Religion divine, and to come from God for those mighty Ends and Purposes, as it is declared to do, and yet that it should be lost entirely; than it would be, to suppose the Scriptures that contain it were alter'd and corrupted in necessary Points, so as to strip the Deity of all Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, and other Attributes.

I might

Sermon
VIII.

I might further alledge, That Fact agrees to, and confirms the present Argument; for, notwithstanding all this Noise about various Readings, Foisting-in, &c. it appears still, that all necessary, fundamental Doctrines are preserved in them all, yea, for ought I know, in the worst Translations; witness the vast Labours of Dr. Mill, who hath presented us with the various Readings of the New Testament. In what consist those different Readings? Sure, generally, in the different Termination of a Word, in a different Word of the same Signification, and the like. A Man of far less Capacity than Dr. Mill might shew this, and it is indeed shewn from his own Collections. And thus much of the Plainness and Purity of Scripture.

Secondly, Hence it follows, within certain Bounds and Limitations, that the Church hath Power to ordain Circumstantials in Religion; and that is plain, because the Scripture is the Rule of Faith; and in this Rule the particular Modes of Worship, and other Things necessary to the very Being of a Church, are not expressed; and if Men will resolve never to be of any Church or Society, until they see all the Circumstantials, all Usages and Orders of it exactly and expressly declared in Scripture, they never will

will nor can be of any *Church* or *Society* at all; because such are not to be found in *Scripture*. Neither is there any *Church* on the Earth, or ever was, whose *Orders* and *Rules* can all be expressly proved from *Scripture*. To those who ask, therefore, (as some weak Men will,) Have you any *Scripture* for such or such a Rite, or Custom, or Practice in your Church? We must answer, no. But what? Will you not therefore be of our *Church*? If not, I will affirm and maintain, still sticking to the same Principle, you can be of no Church, nor Society in the World, but you must be a Man of your Self, a *Disfenter*, not only from ours, but all *Churches* whatever: Because, *seek* you may, but in vain; you shall never find such a *Church*, whose Circumstantials are all expressly declared in *Scripture*. So that, after much Scruple and Difficulty, in this Point, Uncertainty and Wandring, you must, at last, either take up with a *Church*, whose Circumstantials are not at all defined in *Scripture*; (and then truly we have just Reason to complain of partial Dealing, that you insist upon *Scripture* with us, in these Matters, and require it not of others,) or else you must be of no *Church*, or *Communion* at all.

But, although the *Scripture* hath not particularly expressed *Circumstantials*, it hath

done much more wisely; it hath given Power to *Superiors* to order them, and required others to *obey such as are set over them in the Lord*; and it hath given general Rules about these Matters, *Decency, Order, and Edification*, with an Eye to which *Circumstantials* should be directed; and furthermore, it declares such *Contentious*, that conform not to such Orders: *If any will be contentious, let them be so, we have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God.* So that here is nothing wanting in *Scripture*, but a great deal in Men who cannot, or will not see such plain Directions and Precepts.

I have only further to add, That tho' our *Reformers* could not be expressly and particularly directed in every *Circumstantial* by *Scripture*, yet they took (as one would think) the next best Authority and Guide, a Model from the purest and most *primitive Churches*, and composed and adjusted the *Liturgy* of our *Church*, as much as possible, by it. For, who should better know the Forms of Church-Government, which the *Apostles* established, than those that succeeded them? But, alas! *Mistaken Reformers*! That which they thought great Wisdom and Moderation in themselves, and others then so accounted too, is by many accounted their great Mistake; and they had been much better pleased, it seems, if they had model'd the

Church,

Church, as unlike the *Primitive* as possible. Sermon
VIII.

3dly, Hence we see the Ground of Errors and Divisions among *Protestants*, or such as take the Word of God for their Rule. For the *Scripture* is the only sure Rule; but they are weak, passionate, prejudiced Men, that apply it, and judge of Things by it. And who doth not see, that a Rule may be very exact and straight, and yet Men may take Things for granted to be agreeable to it, and so never apply it at all, or else misapply it; and, either of these Ways, form most erroneous Conclusions; and both differ from *Scripture*, and one another. And how much is this the Case? Men are born and bred up under the Influence of such and such Opinions, and a strange Presumption possesses them that these Opinions must needs be true, and all warranted by the Word of God; and so taking them for granted, they never bring them to the Rule of *Scripture*, or fairly try them by it. And then, what signifies the *Exactness*, *Plainness*, or *Sufficiency* of *Scripture*? No more, before, than if there was no such Thing. And a Man must be perfectly blind not to see the little Concernment that possesses Men, the perfect Indifferency they lie under, about Truth, yea, divine Truth. Is this

Sermon the Mark of Men's Endeavours and Cares?

VIII.



Are Men as busy and industrious to find out Truth, as Riches, Pleasures, and Honours? It would be too gross and fulsome Flattering of our own Natures and Practices, and especially in this Place, to affirm any such Thing. I grant, Life is a busy Scene, and most Men are very busily employed; but sure, of all Things, not about *Truth*. To fancy the mighty Bustle which all Ages have produced to be about Truth, would be a strangely pleasant Dream: No certainly, *Truth* is no great Darling of Mankind, is not much sought for and pursued, and yet, without this, Men are not likely to find it. For, as it is a precious Jewel in it self, so it is as coy and reserved as any Thing in the Earth, doth not cheaply and immodestly force it self upon Men, but requires much Pains and Application to compass it: And although Men may stumble upon *Riches*, *Honours*, and *Pleasures*, they will not so easily stumble upon Truth. It is a *Treasure* that lies hid, a *Pearl* that commonly lies deep, that must be often explored, and attentively viewed and considered, ere it will break forth upon Men's Minds in all its lovely, beautiful, and sparkling Rays. Truth, although obvious, and even under Men's Feet, will not be seen, but overlooked and trampled on, without an
extream

extream Love to it. And who is he that thus loves it? Who seeks after it with any great Application and Zeal? Who searches for it as for *hidden Treasure*? Who shakes off Passion, and Prejudice, and Interest, and Party, the better to discern and embrace it? Alas! *Truth* has few such Votaries: So far from this, that if *Truth* holds not forth temporal Advantages and Prospects, who, almost, will own it? And the *Devil*, and the *Lusts* of Men, the great Enemies to *Truth*, take care that seldom such Times be, when *Truth* and worldly *Advantages* go together. Were it not a little out of my Way here, I could heartily bewail the Case of desolate, forlorn *Truth*!

'Tis true, *God* has, as much as possible, secured Men from Error, has given us an infallible Rule, the *Scripture*, the great Magazine of divine *Truth*: *This* holds it forth clearly to all Men, at least, as much of it as is necessary to be known: But it only holds it forth: And what doth that avail, if Men will not read it? Or if they read it, not read it attentively? Or, if they read it attentively, yet with Passion, Prejudice, Pride and Obstinacy, more with Design of confirming their own Opinions by *Scripture*, than taking their Opinions from it? The *Scripture* it self proposes to us Rules in order to read it advantageously,

Sermon and whosoever follows them not, shall read

VIII.

 Rules are to read it as the Word of the *most high God*, as that which informs us in the Way to eternal Life, as that by which we shall be hereafter judged, saved, or condemned everlastingly. We are to come to it as *new-born Babes*, *desiring the sincere Milk of the Word*; and, as such, *innocent and inoffensive*, stript of all Prejudice, and Passion, and Interest, not secretly wishing this or that to be true, as best suiting with our Inclinations or Interest, but following *Truth* wheresoever it lies, or whithersoever it leads us, whether to Honour or Dishonour, evil Report or good Report; if it should bear hard against our former Notions, and separate us from our old Religion and Acquaintance, and set us down in a poor despised *Church*, yet if, upon strict Examination, it appears to be the *Truth*, we are to let all go, *sacrifice* our Interest, Credit, former Notions, Party, nay, *every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*. How else do we make the *Word of God* our *Rule*, and learn from it, if our own Prejudices and Interests more influence us than the *sacred Scripture*, and if instead of making our own Conceits bow and bend to *that*, we make the *Scripture* bend to them? He that comes prepared and disposed with Meekness, Humility, Prayer,

Teach-

Teachableness of Mind, with earnest De-
 fires of knowing the Will of God, in order
 to practise it; such a One will find this
 rich and inestimable Pearl, *Truth*; he hath
 the greatest Security, God's own Promise,
 that if he thus *seeks*, he *shall find*, that
 while he thus desires, and endeavours to do
 the Will of God, he shall know of the Do-
 ctrine of our *Saviour*, whether it be of God
 or of Men. And as this is the Promise of
 the holy *Scripture*, so our *Church*, with the
 aforesaid Conditions and Qualifications, not
 only permits, but earnestly presses on her
 Members, the Reading of the *Word of God*:
 And, notwithstanding all those Outcries
 of the *Roman Church* about *Schisms*, and
Heresies, this she values, being secure of her
 own *Truth*; and therefore, because she
 knows that no Liberty of reading and ex-
 amining the *Word of God* (if Men do it as
 the Word of God it self directs,) can hurt,
 but will strengthen and confirm her.

Lastly, Hence we may observe the wide
 Difference that lies between *us* and the
Church of Rome: Our grand Point of Dif-
 ference, you see, is this, about the Rule of
 Faith. Our *Church* most zealously main-
 tains the *Scripture* to be this Rule: The *Ro-*
manists make *Scripture* an insignificant
 Thing without *Tradition*, and the *Infalli-*

Sermon *lity* of their own Church: And hence flow
 VIII. their impious and absurd Doctrines, *Transubstantiation, Praying to Saints and Angels,* and many more, to admit of which *Scripture* and *common Sense* must be renounced: So that the Difference is great and wide; it is not a Difference in accidental, circumstantial Matters, but in Principles: And while *we* adhere to *Scripture*, and *they* to *Tradition*, there can be no Agreement or Reconciliation. For what of Kin hath our Church to Rome? While we believe the *Scripture* to be the *Rule of Faith*, can we admit of the *Infallibility* of the *Pope*, of *praying in an unknown Tongue*? What? Doctrines so evidently condemned in *Scripture*! Can this be? Never, while the *Scripture* is retained for the *Rule of Faith*.

I speak not of single Members, but of our Church, and I say of it, that it is most diametrically opposite to Rome. Yea, it is the greatest Bulwark against Rome, as foreign Protestant Churches have owned, and as Rome it self knows full well. Remember the late Times of Danger from Rome. Did Rome shew any great good Will to this Church, or this Church to that? Whom did Rome first attack? Was it not this Church? A plain Case that it stood much in its Way, and Rome apprehended it its principal and foremost, I might say, its strongest Enemy.
 And

And, indeed, well might *Rome* apprehend this. For, from whence have proceeded the ablest and fiercest Enemies, the greatest Champions against the *Roman Hierarchy*, but from this Church? Witness our *Jewels*, our *Andrews*, our *Stillingtons*, *Tillotsons*, and many more, all zealous Men for this Church, and yet equally zealous against *Rome*. Read their Writings. Can you espy any the least Partiality for *Rome*? And have they only wrote? Is this all they have done against *Rome*? Have they not suffered likewise? Turn to the *Book of Martyrs*, and see who they were that *resisted unto Blood*, who they were that suffered, not only the Loss of some small Portions of their Estates, but their very Lives; who were massacred in as bloody and cruel a Manner, as the first Christians under any of the Heathen Emperors; in a Word, who make so considerable a Part in that voluminous Book, and shine so gloriously in the *Army of blessed Martyrs*. I tell you, they were all zealous Sons of this Church. This Church, through the *Grace of God*, produced them, and let us rejoice, if not glory in it. This very Church, as dead and formal as it is, and as dead and formal as it makes its Professors, yet let Men that think, and say thus of her, consider with me, this very Church, through the *Grace of God*,
hath

Sermon
VIII.

hath produced real and true *Martyrs*, and *Martyrs* in Opposition to the *Roman Errors*. And yet do we want Arguments to prove, whether our *Church* is fitted to produce Adversaries to *Rome*? Sure 'tis hard, if *Martyrdom* it self, in so many glorious Instances, will not be enough to shew the Opposition of our *Church* against the *Papal Tyranny*.

Thus, you see, it has been at least, thus have the zealous Members of this *Church* acted, and, if ever a Tryal should be, which God forbid, thus they may do again, yea, will and must do, if the Principles of this *Church* be truly held, and faithfully kept, and maintained: Therefore, and for the sake of these excellent good Men, those holy and blessed *Martyrs* dead and gone, that so truly acted after them, and bravely defended them, let not Suspicions and Fears be lightly and easily taken up against this *Church*, as favouring, or leading to, *Rome*. If any should pretend to be of this *Church*, and yet harbour any such Inclinations, this *Church* entirely disowns them. But, I say, Men have all the Security against this, that Principles and former Practices can give them; and Fears, and groundless Aspersions should not be easily credited, in Opposition to Men's Principles, unless their Actions betray them; and when they do, let

let such fall into all the Infamy and Punishment, that such gross Prevarication and Unfaithfulness deserves. But what then? Is it not unjust to suspect us, before any such Actions appear? In the mean Time, should not common Charity possess us all? And as we are ready to believe of the Zeal of *Dissenters* from our Church, that it proceeds from *Conscience*, should we not receive the same charitable Thoughts and Constructions? And should a true Zeal for our Church be interpreted as siding with *Rome*? It appears that true Zeal for our Church, and *Popery*, are the most different Things, that can be; and the more a true Zeal possesses a Man for this Church, at the greater Distance and Defiance he must be with the *Roman Errors*. Such a Gulf of Error is there between us and *Rome*, that no Man can possibly pass over to them, that is well instructed, and confirmed, and established in the Doctrines of this Church. Certainly *Rome* is our common Enemy, and would destroy us all, and having levelled this Church, I will not say, would find but little Difficulty, but I am sure, but little Charity as to others. Who can tell, therefore, in suspecting this Church with respect to *Rome*, at least, whether Men may not suspect their truest and best Friends; what Incongruity and Weakness is this? What

Rome

Sermon *Rome* it self reckons a most deadly Foe,
 VIII. should not all *Protestants* believe a Friend?
 at least, not easily believe an Enemy? It
 should, doubtless, be the Inclination, the
 Interest, the Duty of all *Protestants*, of what
 Denomination soever, were they truly wise,
 to wish Peace, Prosperity, and all true Bless-
 ings to this *Church*, if it be only for her
 stedfast Opposition to *Rome*, if only for the
 gallant and brave Defences she hath made
 against *Rome*, both by Writing and Suffer-
 ing, if only for the Sake of those *blessed*
Martyrs now with *God*, through the divine
 Assistance, that issued from this *Church*;
 whose Blood, you own, was shed in the
 Cause of *God*, and the true Religion, be-
 cause shed in Opposition to the *Roman Er-*
rors; whose Blood, amongst the Rest of the
holy Martyrs, cries against the Persecutors of
 the true Religion, and one Day will be heard
 to their Confusion. That never such Men
 may be wanting in this *Church*, Men of that
 true Constancy, Patience, Wisdom, Learning,
 Godliness, and all other Vertues; and that
 we may in all Things follow and imitate
 their good Actions and Examples, *Do thou,*
O God, grant, in, and through the Merits
and Mediation of thy dear Son Jesus, our blef-
sed Saviour and Redeemer!

S E R M O N



SERMON IX.

Of ENTHUSIASM.



I COR. XIV. 37.

*If any Man think himself to be a Prophet,
or Spiritual, let him acknowledge, that
the Things that I write unto you are the
Commandments of the Lord.*

THE People of *Corinth* (some Sermon
of whom St. Paul had convert- IX.
ed to the Christian Faith) had
been very much perplexed,
and divided by a false Tea-
cher, or Teachers, even to the Neglect of the
Apostle himself, their spiritual Father or
Founder: By several Artifices was this
brought

Sermon brought about, of which you hear at many
 IX. Places in these Epistles; but the greatest
 Delusion and Inveiglement seemed this, in
 the Text, the Pretence of the Spirit. The
 Apostle St. Paul, indeed, might have the
 Spirit, but these new and false Teachers
 professed to have it in a fuller Measure:
 The Apostle's Light was but a *Glow-worm*
 to theirs; he might teach, indeed, some
 common Things, the Rudiments, or the
 general and superficial Matters of the Gos-
 pel, but for the sublime Mysteries, the Per-
 fection and Spirituality of it, that was all
 with them: And if Men would go to the
 Bottom and Secret of this Institution, they
 must follow, and learn of them. These
 mighty Pretences pass'd upon weak Men,
 and caus'd them to look upon St. Paul as,
 comparatively, carnal. But so the Apostle
 would not lose his Authority, nor suffer
 his Converts to be deceived, but, notwith-
 standing these big Words, he makes his
 own Writings the Test of *their* Spirituali-
 ty, and Inspiration: *If any Man thinks*
himself a Prophet, or Spiritual, let him ac-
knowledge that the Things that I write unto
you, are the Commandments of the Lord. By
this try, and judge of their spiritual Preten-
ces: If your spiritual and sublime Tea-
chers submit not readily to my Writings,
nor allow them to be Divine, conclude
 them

them Deceivers, or, in the true and proper Sense of the Words, *Fanatics*, or *Enthusiasts*, instead of *spiritual Men*, or *Prophets*. In which it is imply'd, that all Pretences to the Spirit ought to submit to the Apostolical Writings, and if they presume to go beyond, or oppose them, they are to be rejected as frivolous, and impious.

IX.

In pursuance of this, I shall consider, on the Words,

First, What *Enthusiasm* is.

Secondly, Shew you one infallible Rule of concluding a Man an *Enthusiast*.

Thirdly, I shall consider the great Mischief of *Enthusiasm*.

Fourthly, I shall draw some Inferences from the Whole, by Way of Application.

I. I am to shew you what *Enthusiasm* is. The Word is not in the Text, but the Thing, or the Definition of it, is. If any Man thinks himself, without just Grounds, to be a *spiritual Man* or *Prophet*, he is an *Enthusiast*; or a Pretender to the Spirit which he has not: And he is under a Mistake

Sermon IX. take as to his Inspiration, when, through it, he utters Doctrines, either *contrary* to the Doctrines of the Apostles, or *inconsistent* with them. So that *Enthusiasm* is an extravagant Conceit of one's being inspired by the divine Spirit, destitute of any solid Proof drawn either from sound Reason, or Revelation; and so, is a Mistaking of the Operations of the *natural*, or *diabolical* Spirit for the *Divine*: And, to speak the Truth, *Enthusiasm* is a Sort of religious *Madness*. For as, in *Madness*, Men frequently fancy themselves Kings, or Emperors, so, under the Power of *Enthusiasm*, Men very seriously fancy themselves Prophets, divine, and heavenly Ambassadors. *Madness* is freakish, and furious, so is frequently *Enthusiasm*, appears in many absurd Fancies, and Actions, and through the same Cause: For, in both, the Operations of Reason seem suspended, there is no Restraint upon the imaginative Faculty, there is no subordination of it to the Power of Reason, but Ideas or Thoughts arise in it loosely, irregularly, wildly, uncall'd for, nay, even when opposed. The Cause of this is the evil Temperament of the Body, and Spirits, in conjunction, often, no doubt, with *diabolical Illusions*, which help to excite those wild, and strange Scenes, and put the Man besides himself, or be-
sides

sides the Power of right Reason. This Un-Sermon
boundedness (if I may so express it) of the IX.
Imagination, is what puts the grand Cheat
upon the rational Faculties, makes those
Thoughts not seem a Man's own, because
of their Liveliness, and it appearing to him
that he hath no Hand in raising them, they
being raised frequently in direct Opposi-
tion to his own express Will, and Endeav-
our; and then the unhappy Man seems
two to himself, proceeds to talk, and argue
with himself; in a Word, to esteem all
those Thoughts the Dictates of Spirits, or
Angels, or of the Holy Ghost. And hence,
some of those Thoughts shall appear some-
times delicately fine, full of Flame and
Rapture, although full, too, of great Incon-
sistency: All which shew in what Mint
they were coined, *viz.* That of the Imagi-
nation; which being mightily exalted, no
Wonder that it has mighty Flights, which
seem, although without a Justness, yet not
without an Appearance of Elegancy, which
very Thing Madness it self produces; and
it would really raise a Man's Wonder, to
hear how active and energetical the Spirit
of Enthusiasm sometimes is; how it loos-
ens the Tongue and Speech, and with
what Fluency and Volubility Words flow:
So that what these Men account Inspira-
tion, is frequently nothing else but a Dis-
VOL. I. T temper,

Sermon temper, which several Things concur to

IX. produce; a Disease of the Mind; as appears by their Words, Looks, Actions, and a Thousand other Ways: Whatsoever it be, it is not divine, when it utters Things contrary to the Writings of the *New Testament*: And that's all we are concern'd to know.

This is the IId Point, To shew you one infallible Rule whereby we may conclude a Man an *Enthusiast*, or a groundless *Pretender* to the *Spirit*; and that is, if his Doctrine contradict the written Word of God. This is one Test of Spirits, of what Nature they be; so saith another of these Apostles, *whosoever is of God heareth us; whosoever is not of God, heareth not us*: And that standeth upon three solid Reasons.

1st. No Men ever did, or, I believe, ever will give so strong Proof of the Truth and Divinity of their Doctrines as the Apostles did; and That's the Reason why the Scriptures are the Rule of Faith, and all other Doctrines and Pretences are to be tried by them, because they have had exceedingly the Advantage of other Doctrines, and stand upon more evident Demonstration and Proof. No Doctrines, altho' true and divine, have had such Proof as those of the Apostles have, and therefore

none

none can be so securely depended upon as theirs: For their Doctrines are little else than what *Jesus Christ* himself taught, and so, not only their own Miracles confirm them, but the Miracles of our Lord too; and his were so great, so manifold, that no Prophet ever worked the Like; and consequently no Truths or Doctrines were ever so infallibly, and divinely proved as those of the *New Testament* are. By how much therefore the Miracles of the *New Testament* exceed in Number, and Greatness, and Variety all other, by so much are its Doctrines more certain than others; and hence there cannot be a more certain Proof of the Falseness of any Doctrines, although under the Pretence of Inspiration, than their Opposition to the Revelations of the Gospel.

This holds as strongly against all *Addition* to the Apostles Doctrines, under the Pretence of *Inspiration*; and I mention this because generally this is the Way of false Prophets, not directly to oppose the Apostles Doctrines, but to add many Things to them: But this is equally condemned by this Rule; for it supposes the Apostles of our Lord had not so large and clear Views of the Gospel of our Saviour as themselves, that they omitted some Things necessary for Men to know, and so preach'd the Gos-

Sermon

IX.

pel by halves, and so they lift themselves above the Apostles without any Proof at all, yea, contrary to the Words of the *New Testament*, which raises the Apostles Authority above all Mens; and so they are found again, in the Pretence of adding, directly opposing the Spirit of the Apostles, which will allow of no such Additions. What these spiritual Men or Prophets add, are necessary to Mens Salvation, or not; if not necessary, to what purpose are they added? If they are necessary to Mens Salvation, how came the Apostles to omit them? Was it through Ignorance, or direct Intention, or how? Whatsoever Account is given of this Matter, the Apostles in their Time would hardly have thank'd Men for it.

2dly, The Apostles of our Lord had several high Advantages and Preheminences which other Men never had, nor will have: They were chosen by our Saviour in his Life-time, to be Witnesses of what he did, and taught; to be Apostles, Ambassadors, and the like: And who should know more fully, our Saviour's Will, than they, who were chosen on purpose to teach it? Who should know a King or Prince's Mind so well as his Ambassadors? Who ever saw *Jesus Christ* in the Flesh, and heard him preach,

preach, as the Apostles did? None now at Sermon
 least: Their Authority therefore is beyond IX.
 all others, and all Pretences of the Spirit
 are to submit to their Words, and so the
 Word of God stiles them *first Apostles*.

3dly and lastly, 'Tis impossible, that in
 Matters of Doctrine, two truly inspired
 Men or Prophets should contradict one
 another, because this would infer Contra-
 diction in the Spirit of God himself: In
 that Case therefore one is always a false
 Prophet, or Impostor: So we find true Pro-
 phets acknowledging such as went before
 them, and confirming their own Autho-
 rity by them. Our Saviour acknowledges
 the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets as
 true and divine, and came not to *destroy*
 but to *fulfil* them. 'Tis true, what the
 old Prophets taught, our Saviour hath ex-
 plain'd, but Explications are no Contradi-
 ctions, but an Acknowledgment of their
 Truth: And this he had an Authority to
 do, from the old Prophets themselves who
 wrote of them: So he tells them, *Search*
the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have
eternal Life, and they are they that testify
of me: So that there is no Contradiction
 between the old Prophets, and Apostles;
 between the *Old*, and *New Testament*; but
 rather, a marvellous Harmony between
 T 3 them.

Sermon them. The Apostles, you see, proving the
 IX. Gospel out of the Law; and what *Jesus*
Christ himself or his Apostles did not do,
 no Pretenders to the Spirit must, unless
 with wise and good Men they have a Mind
 to pass for *Agents* of *Satan*, for *Enthusiasts*,
 or spiritual Cheats. And so much for the
second Point, which aims to shew you,
 that all Pretences to the Spirit ought to
 submit to the Apostles Writings and Do-
 ctrines, and consequently, this is an ex-
 cellent Test to discover *Enthusiasts*, or false
 Pretenders to the Spirit by. I come

III^{dly}, To the *Mischief* of *Enthusiasm*,
 or false Pretences to the Spirit. *Three*
Things will, in some Measure, make it
 appear.

1st, The Damage that this hath produ-
 ced to the Church of God. Indeed, the two
 great Pests of the Church in all Ages have
 been *Superstition*, and *Enthusiasm*, and per-
 haps it hath really suffer'd more under the
 Latter than the Former: For it appears
 from the *New Testament* it self, that, ve-
 ry early, the Apostles were rival'd under
 the Pretence of the Spirit, and their Au-
 thority much broken, and the Church di-
 vided upon this Score into different Parties
 and Factions, of which we hear a great
 deal

deal in these two Epistles. What was Si-Sermon
mon Magus, the first *Arch-Heretick*, but a IX.
 grand *Magician*, or *Enthusiast*? Under this
 Character the *New Testament* describes him,
 and many People receiv'd, and follow'd
 him. The succeeding Hereticks differ'd
 from the Apostles, and one another, upon
 the same Inveiglement. The Foundation
 and Bottom of all their Discourses were,
 That they had greater Inspirations and
 Lights, than the true Apostles. The Apo-
 stles were *carnal* to them, they would fre-
 quently say, and consequently, their New
 Testament was to give Way to their greater
 and more spiritual Discoveries, as the
 antient Father *St. Irenæus* will abundantly
 satisfy us. What Divisions and Troubles
 in the early Christian Church did *Monta-*
nus cause? And what was his Pretension?
 Still the same: He could not submit to the
 Authority of the Apostles, and the New
 Testament, but set himself so far above
 them, that he esteemed that Promise of our
 Saviour to his Apostles, *That the Spirit*
should lead them into all Truth, never ful-
 filled but in himself: And hence he was,
 by his Followers, stiled, by Way of Emi-
 nence, The *Paraclete*, or, The *Comforter*:
 Notwithstanding the gross, and startling
 Impiety of this Presumption, yet, how it
 took, and spread? and what Confusions

Sermon and Mischiefs did it derive upon the Church?

IX. All Men know this, who are in the least, acquainted with the History of that Age, as well as how hard it was, and how long, before the Church could free itself from so absurd and impious an Infection. *Novatian* differed from the Church, and made a mighty Noise and Stir, and why? because it was not spiritual, and severe enough. In a Word, What was that grand Impostor *Mahomet*, under whose Superstition so great a Part of the World now lieth? I say, What was he? Read his *Alcoran*, and you will have Reason to believe him the greatest *Enthusiast* in the World: Inasmuch that, so far was he from acknowledging the Apostles his Superiors, as to set himself up above them all, above all Prophets, and Apostles, and gave out a new *Bible*, as the only or most perfect Revelation of God's Will, to which the most profound Homage is now paid by all his Followers. *Lastly*, You who are wise among you, and truly revere God's Word, turn your Eyes back upon the divided, and distracted Condition of our own Church; when we were delivered from the *Superstitions* of the *Roman Church*, the other Extream immediately enter'd, the Extream of *Enthusiasm*, and hath as much disturbed and injured ours, as it did the Primitive, and
upon

upon as unwarrantable, and absurd Grounds; all, more or less, forsaking, or directly opposing God's Word, in its plainest Doctrines and Truths. Blessed God! What strange Things have we called the *Spirit*? What Praying and Preaching have we had by the *Spirit*? How many Prophets have we had, and when Time hath destroyed one Fancy, how soon hath it raised another, to the great Disturbance of every Age and Generation? I can only speak of Things in general, your own Remembrance must recollect Particulars, as it may easily do, for there are enough; only this may serve to shew you What an Inveiglement Enthusiasm hath been in all Ages, Of what Use it hath been to the Kingdom of Darknes, How many Churches it hath disturbed, or ruined; How many poor and ignorant Souls it hath misled, and I fear, destroyed.

2dly, The Evil of Enthusiasm appears in its catching and diffusive Nature: This we see abundantly in the Multitudes it hath perverted in all Ages, and even to the most absurd and impious Opinions. It would really amaze one, that rational Creatures should be capable of entertaining such inconsistent, blasphemous Fooleries as the old Hereticks, or Enthusiasts vented; that
such

Sermon

IX.



such horrid Stuff should have so many Believers and Followers. But we have no need to ransack Antiquity to discover the spreading Nature of Enthusiasm: In this Nation, what Proof have we had of it? What frantick Man did ever set up for a Prophet among us, but many flock'd to him? Did not a Summer or two ago, shew this? Abundantly. 'Tis true, these late Prophets complained that they had not due Encouragement, but, considering the Emptiness of their Pretensions, their many open and palpable Defeats and Disappointments, one would really Wonder they had so much: And one must confess, that it is of a very catching, surprising, diffusive Nature, from the Profelytes it has had in all Ages. How to account for this I know not, unless, in this weak and corrupt State, human Nature cannot so easily admit of Truth, as Error; That it is more exposed to Extravagance and Folly, than right Reason and Sobriety; That it is vastly easier to make Men freakish, than wise and good. This, doubtless, is the great Inlet to this Evil of Enthusiasm; I mean the Corruption of Mankind, which subjects them to the Inveiglements of *Satan*, and his Ministers; and to this Cause the Apostle assigns it, to the great Depravity of our Faculties, to the Ignorance of our Understandings,

standings, and the Perverseness of our **Sermon**
Wills, all which exclude Truth from taking **IX.**
firm Possession of us. Then God giving us
up to believe a Lye, no Wonder Enthusiasm
rouls like a mighty Torrent, and that Men
cannot resist the angelick Form, and Charm
of good and pious Words, of mighty Pre-
tensions, of some Shew of Severity and
Mortification, and a few vain and extra-
vagant Motions and Convulsions of the
Body, which have great Force upon the
Imagination, as the grand Impostor well-
knows, and with which Enthusiasm is usu-
ally, if not always accompanied.

Lastly, The Evil of Enthusiasm appears
in the mighty Difficulty there is in Mens
being delivered from it, when once it has
taken hold and possession of them: And
this arises from the great Discomposure of
such Men's Minds, from Pride, and Impa-
tience of all Contradiction, and divers other
bad Qualities, with which Enthusiasm is
generally accompanied. What can be said
to a Man that believes himself inspired
with the Holy Ghost? Urge Reason. That's
a poor Thing; That he generally calls Car-
nal, an Opposer of the Spirit, and conse-
quently he turns from it as from a very
great Evil, or Temptation. And if you
should advance higher, and alledge Scri-
pture,

Sermon pture, the Effect will be as insignificant :

IX. For what is Scripture with these Men ?

How often have they called it a dead Letter ? to omit worse Names : So that whatsoever the Scripture says is of no Force with them, unless authorized by what they term the Spirit ; into which all is resolved, all tried : And this being a Delusion, they are in the deplorable Condition of those Men our Saviour laments in that Saying, *If the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness ?* If a Man judges of all Things by a Principle or Rule that is utterly false in it self, what dismal Conclusions is he likely to draw, and into what gross and endless Errors to run ?

As true and divine Inspiration mightily disposes Men to Meekness, Humility, and Patience, which are Graces and Qualities exceeding friendly to Truth, and naturally tend to give the Mind clear Views of it, stilling the contrary Passions, overspreading the Soul with gentle Calmness and Peace ; in which Posture and Frame there is Room for the Operations of Reason, and the Grace of God : As these Graces, I say, are the Product of true Inspiration, and qualify the Mind for the Discovery of divine Truth ; so the contrary Passions, Pride, and Impatience, and Disdain, and the like,

wait

wait perpetually upon the Delusion of En-
thusiasm, or a false Pretence to the Spirit,
which incapacitate the Mind greatly for
being undeceived, or convinced. 'Tis hard
to convince a proud Man of any Sort, but
sure much harder to convince a Man grown
giddy and conceited, under a false Per-
suasion, that the divine Spirit teaches him
every Thing. Must not this great Advan-
tage, above other Mortals, swell and blow
him up with Self-Opinion? It will infal-
libly, if it be false, breed in him, instead
of the Gentleness, and Pity, and Compas-
sion, and Charity which appeared in the
true Messengers of God, all the contrary
Qualities, a Sourness, a Moroseness, a Dis-
dain of other Men: In a Word, false In-
spiration produces such a Turbulency of
Spirit as seems utterly to spoil the ratio-
nal Powers and Faculties, at least to disa-
ble them so far, as to render a Man unca-
pable of Conviction, while his Mind is in
that bad Frame and Posture.

Witness all such Men! Witness the late
Prophets! for late Instances are best, be-
cause best remembred. Would any Thing
convince them? Would Reasoning or Scrip-
ture convince? Nay, which is more won-
derful, and fully displays the Power of
Enthusiasm, their own Disappointments,
their own false Prophecies would not con-
vince

Sermon
IX.

Sermon vince them : For they often prophecy'd of

IX. Events, and even made the Fulfilling of these Events *Tests* of their being true Prophets, not a Tittle of which ever came to pass : And yet, Did this open their Eyes ? Did this dismay them ? Not in the least. They went on *agitating* still (as they absurdly enough call'd it) as long as the Novelty lasted, and any Body had Folly and Leisure enough to attend or believe them. And this, as I said, is no Wonder ; for Enthusiasm either finds the intellectual Faculties mar'd and disorder'd, or else infallibly at last, makes them so. I proceed to the *Last Thing*, the Inferences, or Application, which shall be to these following Purposes.

1st, Hence we may judge of *Men* and *Opinions*, Whether they are truly Enthusiastical, or not. The Apostle here gives us a plain Rule for trying Pretences to the Spirit, by which, if we use it with Prudence and Discretion, we shall rarely err, very rarely call any Man an *Enthusiast* that is not so, or fondly admire and follow others who are really so. The Rule you have heard is, the Rule of *God's Word*, or the Apostles Doctrine, which, if any Man will not submit his Opinion to, and try them by, much more if any Man will pre-
sume

sume to oppose or contradict, under the *Sermon*
 Pretence of Inspiration, such a One is ve-
 ry clearly an *Enthusiast*, an unjust Invader
 of the most sacred Titles, is one that would
 pass off *human* Frailties, *human* Conceits,
 or Fancies for *divine* Oracles. Let us bring
 some *Men* and *Matters* to this Test, and see
 how they appear, whether *Prophets*, or *spi-*
ritual Men, or else *Deluders*, or *Delu-*
ded.

IX.

Some Men among us make extraordina-
 ry Pretensions to the Spirit, and have had
 great Success, and many Followers, but,
 upon what slender Grounds these mighty
 Things stand, will evidently appear, if ye
 consider and examine them by the foresaid
 Rule. For, *First*, Do they submit them-
 selves to the Apostles Doctrines? No, so
 far from this, that they cast several strange
 Reflections on the Writings of the Prophets
 and Apostles, which I forbear *here* to ut-
 ter, because their Strangeness, and, fre-
 quently, the good Opinion we have of their
 Authors would, instead of obtaining your
 Belief, expose me to your Censure, as a
 Man given to *blacken*, and the like; and
 my Scope is not to raise your Passions
 against my *self*, or *them*, but to possess you
 with a just Understanding, and Abhorrence
 of their Principles; one of which, I must
 tell you, is, That instead of their Spirit's
 sub-

Sermon submitting to the Rule of God's Word,
 IX. God's Word must submit to their Spirit,
 which is very diligently and largely set forth, and inculcated by their best Authors, and particularly by Mr. Barclai; whose Book hath been industriously spread, and put into the Hands of many Members of our own Church. There you will abundantly see, that the *Spirit*, or the *Spirit in them*, or their Spirit is the *prime* Rule of Faith, and Manners; and the Scripture, although a Rule, is yet inferior, and subordinate to this Spirit; which runs directly contrary *here* to the Apostles Doctrine. For, if the *Spirit* had been intended in all Ages as the *prime Rule of Faith*, and Practice, how could the Apostle *here* so peremptorily say, That, by his Writings, this very Pretence of the Spirit should be tried? and such as would not acknowledge his Writings to be the Commandments of the Lord, although contrary to the Dictates of their own Spirit, such Men should not deem themselves, or be deemed by others, either *Spiritual*, or *Prophets*: What is this, but that the Writings of the Apostles, or the *New Testament*, should try all Pretences to the Spirit? And is not this to make the written Word of God *superior* to what Men call the Dictates of the *Spirit*? Most certainly! Unless Men can fancy that the
 Rule

Rule which is to try other Things is less certain, less sure than the Things tried by it; or, that it is Wisdom, or good *Logick*, of which these Men stand greatly in need, to try a certain infallible Thing by another less certain and sure. Is the *Spirit* to be tried by *God's Word*? What? And is yet the *Spirit* superior to *God's Word*? O the prodigious Blindness of this *Spirit*, that so oddly and absurdly dictateth in Men!

What? Is there not a good, and a bad *Spirit*? Are there not false as well as true *Prophets*? And how will you distinguish them? Not by their own Words be sure, for they all lay Claim to the divine *Spirit*; they must therefore all submit to a *Trial*, and by what shall they be tried? They must say by the *Scripture*: For, What else can they rationally say? And, What more clear from such a Concession, than that the *Scripture* is superior to all Pretensions of the *Spirit*, now, whether good or bad, because all Pretensions to the *Spirit*, whether true or false, are to be examined, and proved, and determined by it?

But what doth this dictate? You see here *St. Paul* intimates, If any Man, professing the *Spirit*, will not acknowledge his Writings to be the Commandments of the Lord, he vainly pretends or thinks himself *Spiritual*, or a *Prophet*. Now, Do they receive

Sermon the Writings of St. Paul, as the Command-

IX.  ments of the Lord? How come they then to neglect the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? to imagine, and teach it to be no Duty? Doth not our Lord himself command it? *Do this in remembrance of me.* Doth not St. Paul say too, *That he received it of the Lord?* And do they acknowledge his Writing in this Particular to be the Commandments of the Lord? Yet they receive it not, their Spirit opposes it. You have therefore here, Brethren, St. Paul's own Word for it, that is, God's infallible Word for it, that they are neither spiritual Men nor Prophets. If they would pass for such, I say it not to them but the *Apostle*, Let them acknowledge the Sacrament, that St. Paul so largely treateth of, to be the Commandment of the Lord.

I could produce you divers Instances more of very plain and clear Opposition between *their* Spirit and the *Apostle's* Writings, whereby it would fully appear, That there lurketh a stronger Poison in the Principles of this Religion, than even some among themselves, I in Charity hope, are aware of: But in regard these Things, I believe, are remote from your Reading, and lie close in Books, under obscure, dark, and ambiguous Sayings, to which, perhaps, you may have observed them a little subject,

ject, a little more subject perhaps than Sermon
 other Men; for these, and other Reasons, I
 rather choose to shew the Inconsistency of
 this Spirit with the Apostles Writings, from
 Matters which unquestionably they hold,
 and never deny'd: The *First* was the Sa-
 crament of the *Lord's Supper*. I shall add
 another Thing, which it is well known
 they deny, I mean the Sacrament of *Bap-*
tism: For, do not the Apostles in their
 Writings enjoin *Baptism* upon their Con-
 verts? Doth not Christ command it? *Go,*
teach all Nations, baptizing them. — And did
 not the Apostles so understand, and pra-
 ctise it, and baptize, where they converted
 Men to the Christian Faith? Doth not all
 this fully appear in the *New Testament*?
 They acknowledge this; but deny it to be
 the real, *Christian Baptism*. But then, what
 is the Christian Baptism? The Baptism of
Fire, or of the *Spirit*, they tell you. But
 is there no other Christian Baptism but
 this? Is there no such Thing as *Water Bap-*
tism? No: 'Tis all superstitious. And is
 this true? Then, I am sure, these following
 Words of our Saviour (I desire you to par-
 don the Expression) must be false: For he
 saith, *Whosoever is not born of Water, and*
of the Spirit, cannot enter into the Kingdom
of God. Judge again, Brethren of the Op-
 position of this Spirit to our Saviour's Words,

Sermon and if you believe our Saviour, how can
 IX. you believe *Water Baptism* (as they term it)
 unnecessary, or superstitious, when it is
 made the Means of entering into eternal
 Life? I could more fully shew you the Con-
 trariety of this to Scripture, but I must re-
 member it has been other Mens Province,
 and I hope you need no Conviction about
 That.

There are many other Opinions that par-
 take of *Enthusiasm*, as you will find, if
 you candidly try, and examine them by
 this *Test*:—As for Example: Some Years
 ago, What more common Expression than
 that *Praying by a Form was a Stinting of the*
Spirit? And what did, in many Mens Un-
 derstandings, more strongly imply a spiri-
 tual Man, than an Ability both to pray
 and preach (as it was term'd) *extemporary*?
 And how many Men, did this Inveigle-
 ment carry off from our Church? In
 which Apprehension Men evidently disre-
 garded the sacred Scripture: For That re-
 presents even our Lord himself instituting
 a Form of Prayer, and commanding us to
 use it, and direct our selves by it, and
 even using a Form himself, in a Case of the
 greatest Urgency, praying to his Father in
 the same Words. Can any Man hence
 think a Form inconsistent with spiritual
 Praying? Never, while he attends both to
 the

the Instruction and Example of our Lord : Sermon
And I make no Scruple to say, That the
contrary is Enthusiastical ; is a Pretending IX.

to the Spirit in a Point which both Right and Reason, and the Word of God discourage : For, Where are Men encouraged in the Word of God, to utter themselves hastily ? or, which is all one, without Pre-meditation in publick Prayer ? To use little or no Care where every one confesses the greatest should be taken, I mean in addressing the great and eternal Majesty of Heaven and Earth ? To presume more upon God than Man, and expect the Assistance of the Spirit, in order to prevent the ill Effects of our own Carelessness or Negligence ? Can a Man be more careless than not to consider before-hand, of what he will say to God ? And is this the Way to have the Help of the Spirit ? No Man can deduce such a Conclusion from right Reason or Scripture, if he diligently attends to either. I pass on to

The 2d Inference that these Words of the Apostle and this Discourse on them suggesteth, and which is an admirable Means to preserve us from Enthusiasm, viz. That we be very conversant, and consequently very well instructed in the Word of God. This follows necessarily, and clearly ; for

Sermon all Pretensions to the Spirit are to be tried
 IX. by the Word of God, or the Doctrine of
 the Apostles, and if found inconsistent with
 it, are to be rejected as impious. Men, there-
 fore, in order to make good Judgments as
 to what is truly Enthusiastical, ought to be
 well read, and well skilled in the Word of
 God, which is the Standard, and Measure,
 and Touchstone of Doctrines. And this
 not only the Nature of the Thing implieth;
 for Scripture is the Rule, and in order to
 judge well of other Things by it, we must
 know what the Scripture teacheth; but, I
 say besides, this Experience confirmeth.
 For who are the Men extremely subject to
 the Delusion of Enthusiasm, but Persons
 grossly ignorant of Scripture, and the Di-
 ctates of right Reason? Upon weak and
 ignorant Minds, how easy is it to insinuate
 any Thing? The Apostles of our Lord, in
 their Writings, and afterwards the Primi-
 tive Fathers, represent this to be the Artifice
 of false Prophets, and Seducers: The proper
 Matter to work upon was, Ignorance of the
 Christian Faith, of what Doctrines it
 taught, or condemned: This rendered Men
 capable of any Impression, and of being
 moulded and framed to any Design, for
 ever hunting after Novelties, because void
 of the true Knowledge of God, and our Sa-
 viour, and at no Certainty in Matters of
 Religion.

Religion. Is not this the Character St. Paul Sermon gives of such as were led away with these spiritual Pretences? He calls them *silly People*, that were ever learning, and yet never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth; and for Want of this, they were ready to believe every Thing that was offered to them, or, like light Things, were tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine; of this Religion to Day, and another to Morrow, and as variable in their Opinions, as their own, or other Mens Fancies could make them; and for the Reason before-mentioned, because they had not obtained a Certainty or Knowledge of what the Christian Faith taught, and so they were always ready for new Doctrines or Discoveries, being without true Conviction in any Thing. In very antient Time there were a Sort of Christian Enthusiasts call'd *Seekers*, and for this they urged that Saying of our Lord, which was for ever in their Mouths, *Seek, and ye shall find*; and this their Founders so perversely interpreted, as to make their Followers instable in all Things, and for the whole Course of their Lives to search after new Doctrines and Discoveries, which afforded room for them to introduce an endless Mass of absurd Opinions, in direct Contradiction both to the *Old* and *New Testament*. And so it is: Men ignorant of

IX.

Sermon

IX.



what the Christian Religion teaches, which arises from a Want of understanding the Scriptures, are in perpetual Quest of they know not what; are most charm'd with Novelties, or Things they never heard before; as if the Christian Religion was an endless Thing, and, never to be drained, fix'd our Belief to no certain Doctrines, but afforded Matter for perpetual Amusements or Speculations, or contained in it the whimsical Conceits of all Ages and Men.

This all aims to shew you one admirable Preservative against Enthusiasm, and that is, a good Understanding of the Word of God; and next to this, Improving and Cultivating your Reason, both by humane and divine Aids and Assistances. There is not such an Enemy to Enthusiasm as a sound and good Understanding, improved and enlightened by the Word of God. Preserve, therefore, the natural Vigour of your own Minds; extinguish not that Spark of Reason God hath kindled in you, by Vice and Prejudices; improve, enlarge, and perfect it by the Light and Assistance of his *Word* and *Grace*, and you will know how to distinguish true Religion from Freakishness, divine Doctrines from vain Opinions, *true* from *false* Prophets. The Scripture, if ye rightly understand it, is able to make
ye

ye wise to Salvation, and that's enough; what can ye desire more?

Sermon
IX.

3dly, The Doctrine of the Text presents to our View the Excellency of our own Church. *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm* are two great Evils in a Church, they are two Extreame, and, to avoid the One, Care is to be taken, and Judgment used not to run into the Other; and 'tis a Delicacy, and Niceness of Judgment to hit the true Mean: And this we believe our *Reformers* have done. Here our Church standeth, we boast, and not without Reason, upon this solid and middle Point; between the two fore-mentioned Extreame: It is an Enemy both to *Superstition*, and to *Enthusiasm*: It watches and guards against both, and both are Enemies to it. An unequal War, you will say, to defend it self against both: But it is securely placed, and hath maintained it self hitherto, and we hope ever will.

We detest *Superstition*, and in this we agree with others who dissent from us, and we only beg their Leave to avoid the other Extreame too, that of *Enthusiasm*. This we have never been charged with, altho' with *Superstition*; and that we cannot come further, and, in their Sense, clear our selves of this latter too, is for fear of the contrary,

Sermon ry, for fear of running into some Degrees
IX. of Enthusiasm.

For should we deny the Sacraments, and resolve all into the private Dictates of the Spirit, should we not be *Enthusiasts*? And yet to this Degree of *Reformation* a great Body of Men expect we should arrive. Should we throw off all Forms in Prayer, and depend altogether upon the Spirit for Matter and Words; still, would not this be a little too far Spiritualizing, and partake of Enthusiasm? It would certainly be Enthusiasm, or Imprudence. For if this Practice, in such as differ from us, be grounded upon an Expectation that the Spirit will dictate Words in Prayer, 'tis evidently the First; 'tis Enthusiasm. If this Supposition now be quitted, altho' formerly professed, yet we leave the Devotion of the Congregation at great Hazard, when we might better secure it by Forms, which Thing one cannot call by a softer Name, I think, than Imprudence. It is a very strange Expectation in them, that our Church should leave out the *Order of Bishops*, so well grounded, she thinks, upon the Authority of God's Word, and so constantly and universally established, and received in the first Ages of Christianity; That she should so far reform from *Rome*, as to reform from what is good as well as bad, to leave unconsulted,
unre-

unregarded, all antient *Liturgies, Prayers, Sermons*,
 all antient *Orders and Customs*. This is to be *Spiritual* indeed! Such a Sort of *Spirituality*,
 I confess, our Church could not rise to, for
 fear she should have gone beyond the Di-
 states of sober and good Sense, or the Re-
 velations of God's Word, and so have run,
 not a little, into the other Extream, that of
Enthusiasm. To me, I confess, it appears a
 very great Blessing, that she settled where
 she did; and had she gone farther from
Rome, for ought I know, she might have
 been, by this Time, nearer to it; because
 where she is, she is upon solid, inexpugna-
 ble Ground, where she did, and can, and, I
 hope, ever will defend her self against all
 the Attacks from that Quarter; which, I
 fear, she would hardly have been able to
 have done in a weaker, altho', in some
 Men's Opinion, a farther Distance from
 her grand Enemy, *Rome*, or *Superstition*.
 Now, where she is, she is surrounded with
 Reason, Primitive Fathers, Scripture; is
 truly moderate towards all Men; whereas,
 sure, she must have wanted some of these
 Advantages, had she been where some Men
 would have had her, she could not have
 used all these Weapons against *Rome*, and
 consequently, never could have been such
 a Fortrefs against the *Emissaries*, and *Inrodes*
 of

Sermon of Rome, as she now is, such a Skreen to all
 IX. other *Protestants*.

Lastly, Let this teach us to beware of
Enthusiasm, as well as *Superstition*. It is evi-
 dent, *Enthusiasm* hath done great Hurt to
 the Church of God; hath inveigled, sedu-
 ced, and undone many. Let us therefore
 have a watchful Eye against *this*, as well as
 against the *other*. The Aim and Scope of
 the Enemy of Mens Salvation is their spi-
 ritual and eternal Ruin, and sometimes *this*
 does it best, and sometimes *that*; and, for
 the Thing be done, it is all one to him
 what Way does it. Only, *some* Ways do
 it in *some* Ages and Countreys better than
others; and those, be sure, he persecutes.
 We have a marvellous Hatred of *Supersti-
 tion*, and it is commendable; but why none
 of the contrary Evil, *Enthusiasm*? Are
 there no Errors but *Popish* Errors? Or, Can
 nothing but Popery Undo us? Alas! What
 was it once that overthrew this Church, but
 unjust Pretences to the Spirit? And, where
 is the Difference, to admit of an *infallible
 Chair*, or a private, and *infallible Spirit*?
 What odds, to a good and wise Christian,
 to acknowledge the *Pope infallible*, or any
 other *Man* or *Men infallible*? Both derogate
 from the Authority of God's Word: And
 although Reasons of State may move our
 Indig-

Indignation more against one than the other, yet, true Christianity doth not, if their Errors are equal. And I defy Popery it self to shew Opinions more repugnant to true Christianity than what Enthusiasm hath invented. Beware therefore of hearkening to it. Beware of Men that persuade you to throw off, as carnal, such Ordinances as *Jesus Christ* hath instituted. The Pope himself, altho' he hath had Presumption enough, yet never hath he had the Presumption to do this. He, with the Pretence of General Councils, hath, indeed, made the Sacrament a strange Thing; hath altered it from its original Institution, but never quite abolished it. *Baptism* hath been *incumber'd* by that Church, indeed, with many *Superstitions*, but never *scouted* as foolish, and unnecessary. Do I preach up Popery here? So weak Men may understand me: But while I declare I abominate *that*, so permit me to declare my Aversion to other Errors, equally contrary to God's Word. The Roman Church tells you, that the *Bread* and *Wine* is the very *Body* and *Blood* of our Lord? That's our Quarrel against them. And have we no Quarrel against others who lay it all aside, and make it a Jest? The Roman Church calls ours *Heretical*, and *Schismatical*, others call it *Antichristian*, and, Where

Sermon is the great Difference? So that, certainly,
IX. if you believe aright, you are to believe,
 both Enemies, and both are to be guarded
 against. And I pray God keep us from both,
 and all other erroneous Ways, that we may
 always adhere to his Word!



SERMON

SERMON X.

Of attending the PUBLICK
WORSHIP.

MATTH. XVIII. 20.

*For, where two or three are gathered toge-
ther in my Name, there am I in the
Midst of them.*

THESE and the foregoing Sermon
Words, contain several extra-
ordinary and gracious Promi-
ses to the Church of God, upon
which its Authority is founded,
and it is distinguished from all other Societies
on the Earth. For, sure, the Church of God is
made considerable, in that, Refractoriness to
its

Sermon

X.

its Injunctions and Decrees subjects a Man to the greatest Infamy. So our Lord saith, *But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen Man, or a Publican.* This will put him into the Number of the worst Sort of Men. So again, that the just and lawful Decrees of the Church, here on Earth, should be ratified and confirmed in Heaven; for, *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.* What can be greater than this is? What a greater Trust, or Priviledge? So again, observe the mighty Prevalency of the Prayers of the Church of God; *If two of you shall agree on Earth, as touching any Thing that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.* Of no less Advantage, and Use, and Comfort is this Promise in the Text, *For, where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* In which Words it will be needful for us to understand,

Sermon

X.

First, What it is to meet together in Christ's Name.

Secondly, What is to be understood by our Saviour's being present with Men, upon this their assembling together in his Name.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Of what Importance to us the Truth directly asserted in these Words is, viz. *The Certainty of our blessed Saviour's Presence with all Men duly assembled in his Name.*

Sermon
X.

Lastly, What useful and practical Inferences, or Reflections the Whole will yield us, by Way of Application.

I begin with the *First*, To shew you what it is to meet together in *Christ's Name*. Of this we ought to be careful, because in it is implied a Duty, or a Qualification on our Part which, only, entitles us to the Promise, and without which we shall be infallibly disappointed in our Expectations of so great a Good and Blessing as the Company and Society of the Son of God. Now to meet in our Saviour's Name, under the Notion of a Church, is an Expression of a large Extent, and comprehends several Things under it; the most principal, and necessary of which I shall select, and explain to you.

I. To meet together in our Saviour's Name must certainly imply our steady and firm Belief in his Person and Doctrine, for this is what is meant by this Way of Speaking at many other Places of the *New Testament*;

Sermon

X.

flament; To name the Name of Christ, to believe on the Name of the Son of God, &c. is all one as to profess our selves Christians, or to profess and believe the Doctrines which our Saviour taught Mankind, and which now stand recorded in the *New Testament*: And to meet in our Saviour's Name must suppose, as its Ground and Foundation, a Belief of those Doctrines which our Saviour hath revealed, and especially such of them as are necessary to eternal Life. For there are some peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, the Belief of which is necessary to make a Man a Christian, and therefore necessary to constitute a Christian Church, which is but a Society of Men professing Christianity, which consisteth in their Belief of the Doctrines or Articles which our Lord hath revealed, and required the Belief of: *It is built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner Stone*; that is, upon a firm Belief of their Doctrines and Revelations, without which, a Man could be no Follower, no Believer, no Disciple of the Son of God, and consequently, if not only two, or three, but ten Thousand such Men met together, they would never meet in our Saviour's Name, but according to their own Fancies, or the Dictates or Names of others, and so would never be a Christian Church. So

So sure is this, that the ancient Christian Sermon
Church required the Belief of the main X.
and necessary Doctrines of Christianity in
order to Baptism, or Men's Admission into
the Church, whose Example our Church
follows. And as this was necessary to enter
Men into the Church, so a Denial of any
of those fundamental Articles, was judged
by the Apostles themselves sufficient Cause
to cast them out of it. Thus *Hymeneus* and
Alexander were delivered over to Satan by
St. Paul, for Errors of Faith; and others
for *spiritualizing* the Doctrine of the *Resur-*
rection in such a Manner, as to overthrow
that Article, which the Apostle calls *Over-*
throwing the Christian Faith: And hence it
is, that the antient Church, as well as ours,
would have a Repetition of the Creed to be
Part of her publick Service, and all are
bound to make Profession of their Faith in
these Points, because of the necessary De-
pendance that any Christian Church or So-
ciety hath upon a Belief of them; it being
impossible, where they are not held and
professed, that Jesus Christ should be own-
ed, or that Men should meet together in his
Name. This therefore is the *first* Thing;
to meet in our Saviour's Name, must imply
Men to be Believers, or Christians, under
which Denomination they are, from their
Assent to the Doctrines of the *New Testa-*
ment,

Sermon *flament*, and especially such of them as are
 X. sum'd up in the *Creeds*, and made necessary
 to everlasting Life.

Secondly, There must not only be an Union of Faith and Principles, but of Love and Charity in order to constitute a Church, or Society met together in our *Saviour's Name*. Where a Number of Men assemble who believe not, at least, the essential, necessary Doctrines of Christianity, they constitute not a true Church but an heretical Assembly; and where they meet not with Love and Charity, if not actually schismatical, as some say, yet they are always in Danger of being so. For *Faith* and *Charity* are the two great Bonds of any Christian Society, and as without true *Faith* Men can never be good *Christians*, so neither without *Charity* can any Number, whether great or small, be Fellow-Members of a *Christian* Society, or Church: For a Church is made up of particular Members, and if they are in no wise Christian, the Whole which they compose can never be so. And this our Lord seems evidently to point at, and recommend: For, he saith, *If two of you shall agree on Earth*, which implies Union of Temper and Disposition, especially as to the Matter and Manner of their Addresses to God: In
 this

this Agreement or Union, according to our Saviour's Doctrine, consisteth the Prevalency of publick Prayers, and the contrary Division marreth the Force and Effect of them. As in all other Cases, where many join and unite to an End, their Strength is increased in Proportion to their Number, and they stand a great deal the fairer for Success; but Division defeateth all, maketh a great Multitude no more than one Man. 'Tis the same in Prayer to God; if he is prevailed upon by the Addressee of one good Man, how much more by the Addressee of many such? This Union and Love doth in publick Prayer, it collecteth the Piety, the Zeal, the Charity, the Importunity of the Whole, and, as it were, presenteth it as one Thing, so that it is no longer to be considered as the Prayer of one, or another, but the Devotion of the Whole, in which every one receiveth Advantage; yea, the Advantage of the Whole, which must be very moving upon the Great and Almighty Being. Thus it is when *Charity* and *Union* animate publick Prayers, and are, as it were, the Soul and the Life of them. But how is it on the contrary Supposition? Why, then every Man's Prayers stand single, receive no Assistance from one another; although their Bodies are together, their Minds and Spi-

Sermon rites are asunder, which maketh it but a
 X. Sort of a private Devotion to every Body,
 and presents us but with a very sad Image
 of a Church, which indeed ought to be a
 Collection of Men united, not by *Time*
 and *Place* only, but, according to the Ex-
 ample of the Primitive Christians, by
Heart, and *Affection*; so that as they are
 considered but as one Body, so, but one
 Soul, but one Spirit, or one Heart animates
 them. Our Saviour hath recommended this
 Qualification very strongly at other Places
 of his Word; indeed he hath made it ab-
 solutely necessary to our Acceptance with
 God, whether in the Church or out of it:
 But in regard to publick Worship, he saith,
If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and
there remembereſt that thy Brother hath ought
againſt thee, leave thy Gift before the Altar,
and go thy Way, firſt be reconciled to thy Bro-
ther, and then come and offer thy Gift. Our
 Gift now, under the Gospel, is Eucharistical
 Prayer, and Thankſgiving; if therefore thou
 haſt any Thing againſt thy Brother, or he
 has any Thing againſt thee, neither will thy
 Prayer be heard, nor Thankſgiving accepted,
 by Reason of thy hidden Anger, ſay the A-
 poſtolicall Conſtitutions: And of this was the
 ancient Church ſo ſenſible, that it was the
 Cuſtom for a *Deacon*, before publick Prayers
 began, to proclaim aloud, in the Ears of
 all

all the Congregation, these Sentences; *Sermon*
 μὴ τις ἐν τῷ, μὴ τις ἐν ὑπόκρίσει, Let no one
 have a Quarrel against another; Let no one
 come in Hypocrisie. This is therefore an-
 other Qualification requisite to the Form-
 ing any Christian Society, or Church, as-
 sembled in the Name of Christ, Men must
 meet together, and be held, not only in
 Bond of Faith, but Charity and Love.

Thirdly, Meeting together in our Savi-
 our's Name, must imply or require such
 Devotions as are agreeable to his Word and
 Will; for the principal End of this assem-
 bling together is Prayer, as is seen in the
 foregoing Verse: Now, although the Pro-
 mise is general, of *whatsoever Thing shall be*
asked of God, yet is that to be restrained
 to such Things as are proper Matter of
 Petitions, or are agreeable to the Mind and
 Will of God, which Mind and Will is sig-
 nified at many Places of Scripture, and par-
 ticularly in that Form of Prayer our Lord
 hath left us, which, according to all, sug-
 gests the principal Matter of Prayer, or
 what Things we ought to pray for, and is
 upon all Accounts a perfect Model, or
 Pattern, by which all Christian Devotion
 should be guided: So that *this* is to be ob-
 served, as well as *other* Things, if we
 would be met together in our Saviour's

Sermon

X.



Name; That the Devotions be agreeable to his Will, that his Name be truly glorified thereby: And there is one general Direction about this, given at many Places of the *New Testament*, that whether Prayers, or Praises, or Thanksgivings, all should be offered in the Name of the Son of God: Whatsoever we ask of God, we should ask for his sake; and very probably our Saviour had a particular Regard to this, in the Expression of meeting together in his Name, that is, supplicating the Father for his sake, through his Merits, and Sufferings; from this only our Prayers deriving any Efficacy, and being the only Thing that moveth the Almighty Being to hearken to them, or fulfil them.

Fourthly and Lastly, This Meeting together in our Saviour's Name, implieth, our Assembling together under such *Rules* and *Officers* as he himself appointeth. Before the Text our Saviour speaketh of the *Church*, and in support and vindication of that Authority he had invested it with, and these latter Verses are brought in as having an evident Relation thereto. The Man that regardeth not the Interposition of the *Church* is to be deemed a Heathen, or Publican; For whatsoever ye, that are Governours of the *Church*, shall bind on Earth,

Earth, shall be bound in Heaven: Your Sentences and Decrees shall be acknowledged, and stand good there. Yea, so true is this, that the Agreement and Request of any two of you shall be heard by God: And no Wonder, for I promise to be in the *Midst* of any Number, although never so small, assembled together in my Name. Which seemeth very evidently to imply such a Sort of Assembly as we apply the Name of Church to; and about this there are Rules given in sacred Writ, and to depart from them, or neglect them and assemble together according to Mens own Fancies, and not the Word of God, would not be to meet so much in *Christ's Name*, and according to his Will, as in their own, but of this I have said enough in another * Discourse.

Thus then ye have heard, what is implied by meeting together in our Saviour's Name: It cannot be without a firm and lively Faith in our Saviour's Person and Doctrine, without mutual Charity and Love, without offering up such Devotion or such a Worship to him as is suitable to his divine Majesty, Nature, and Will; and, lastly, not without the Observation of such Rules, and Submission to such Officers, as he hath

* See Sermon Third, of the Catholick Church.

appoint-

Sermon appointed in his Word. And we can never
 X. be too serious nor diligent in considering
 of these Things, because upon them depends
 the Fulfilling of our Lord's Promise, and
 consequently all the Good, all the Blessing
 that Approaching the Church can derive
 upon us. For, indeed, what can it avail a
 Man to frequent Christian Assemblies, or
 how can this Promise belong to him, who
 is himself no Christian, who believes not
 our Saviour's Doctrine, but perhaps in ma-
 ny Instances and Articles opposes it? What
 can it profit a Man to join himself to his
Brethren, by his *bodily* Presence, when he
 is *dissevered* in *Heart* and *Affection*? Or,
 How can our Lord be in the Midst of a
Devotion which is disagreeable to his Word,
 and Will? Or, Lastly, How vain must it
 be for a Man to follow Assemblies which
 are void of the *Rules*, and *Orders*, and *Sa-*
craments, which our Saviour hath institu-
 ted? Such Mistakes must assuredly render
 us much unqualified for the Promise in the
 Text.

Doubtless, Going to Church is a great
 Duty; but if we would discharge it well,
 and profit by it, we should consider where,
 and with what Qualifications of Mind: For
 it is not every *Meeting* of Men that is a
Church; there must be the *Faith*, the *Cha-*
rity, the *Worship*, and the *Order* that our
 Saviour

Of attending the Publick Worship.

315

Saviour has required, if we expect his Company. And this, in my Opinion, should root out of us that *Indifferency* which prevails in too many, as if all Societies, all Churches were the same, and they can equally serve God any where, without Regard either to the Doctrines or the Devotions of Churches. An absurder Notion cannot easily enter Men's Minds, which serves more bad Purposes than One, but none more than the Interest of the Church of *Rome*: For if this were true, where were the Necessity, the Wisdom, and the Excellency of the Reformation?

Sermon

X.

Surely the Doctrine, the Worship, the Order of our Church is good, sound, primitive, and apostolical; and we can never stand too firm nor unshaken therein: And, if my Advice might pass, I would not have you loosely profess them, but in your Minds and Judgments prefer them to others. And if you bring with you *Faith*, and *Charity*, or *Love to God and Men*, (to do which, must be your own great Care and Endeavour), I have no need to doubt, but ye will find the Promise made good in the Text, of enjoying our Saviour's peculiar Presence and Assistance, and all the Benefits and Blessings imply'd therein.

I come

Sermon

X.

I come now to the *Second Particular*, viz. To shew what is to be understood by our Saviour's being *present* with Men, upon this their *assembling* together in his Name.

And this Promise must imply not only his *seeing* and observing Men so collected together, for thus he *sees* all Men, the worst Societies and Combinations of Men, even such as are met together to the Dishonour and Blasphemy of his *Name* and *Doctrine*: From this Sort of Presence none can hide or exclude themselves. I say, it not only implies this common and ordinary Presence with which he necessarily fills all Places and Things, but somewhat of a more peculiar and distinguishing Nature: For it is to be remembred, that these Words are brought in by Way of Motive and Encouragement to a Duty, and therefore contain some peculiar Advantage and Good: And that is, doubtless, besides our Saviour's bare Presence; his Help and Assistance in the Performance of our Duty; his Hearing of our Prayers; his Presenting them to God the Father, and Supplying their Defects and Imperfections through the Merit of his own Blood; his Joining his holy Spirit to the outward Means he hath appointed in his Church of Men's Conversion and Edification, and Making them effectual to the Purposes, for which he hath ordained them, in

Spea-

Speaking to the *Heart* while Man speaketh to the *Ear*, and Opening their Understandings, and Testifying to the Truth of his own Doctrine. In a Word, he is amidst all true Christian Assemblies, as the Head of the Church, both to bless his Ordinances, and them who use them, without which, they were nothing, were no Church, or divine Assembly, no divine Ordinances of Acceptance with God, nor of any spiritual Benefit or Effect to Men. I pass on to

The *Third Thing*, To inculcate the Truth directly asserted in these Words, the *Certainty* of our blessed Saviour's *Presence* with all Men duly assembled in his *Name*. Indeed all Nations, Heathens as well as Jews and Christians, have been of this Opinion, that a more extraordinary Presence and Influence of the Deity attended Societies of Men assembled for divine Worship, in Places set apart to that Purpose, greater Expectations had they always from this than from their private Devotion, and in their private Houses, and therefore they resorted to their Temples upon all extraordinary Occasions for Revelations, for Cure of their Diseases, and the like, imagining in these Places more especially the Deity more disposed to vouchsafe his Goodness and Power, and confer his Assistance and Blessing.

And

Sermon

X.

And although these Men, the Heathens; of whom I speak, were under a false and idolatrous Worship, yet their Notions and Practices in this Particular were conformable to the highest Reason: For nothing bringeth so great Honour to God as publick Worship doth, because this is an outward Declaration of the inward Reverence we have of the Deity, of our Dependance upon him, and Gratitude to him, and is of great Use to others; and therefore it is no Wonder that it is encouraged and rewarded by God, by peculiar Favours and Blessings: For that Devotion which bringeth the greatest Honour to the Name of God, we may be sure, he more especially regardeth: And who can doubt but *publick* Worship, has, by far, the Advantage over *private* in this respect? This, I say, human Reason taught the Heathens, and they practised accordingly, always expected a more gracious and free Intercourse with their Gods from their publick Addresses and Applications to them, and in their publick Places of Worship, than their private.

And had not the Jews, God's peculiar People, the same Opinion? Did not Revelation teach and inculcate the same Truth? They were led to this, not only by Promises, but by peculiar Manifestations of the divine Presence, and Glory, which were,

indeed, no where else to be found but in the House of God : And with what an ardent Zeal did a Sense of this inspire devout Men among them, to visit his Temple, to attend publick 'Worship, because of his more especial Presence residing there? With what Joy and Transport do they speak of it? And what an Evil do they account any Thing that deprived them of so great a Blessing? *One Day in thy House is better than a Thousand. Lord I have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the Place where thine Honour liveth. As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so longeth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God, O when shall I come to appear before the Presence of God! One Thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, and to visit his Temple!* What an Opinion had these Men of publick Worship, and the Advantages it procured them?

Neither are we *Christians* under a different Dispensation, as to this Matter; we are not without peculiar Encouragements, and Promises of an especial Presence of God, of an especial Influence and Blessing upon our attending publick Worship, in Places devoted to that Use; yea, we are more

Sermon

X.

more happy than the Jews were in this respect, for God was pleased amongst them to choose out but one peculiar Place above the Rest to display his Name and Glory in, to receive the Offerings and Addresses of his People, and to bless them in: But now, under the *Christian* Dispensation, the divine Presence is confined to no peculiar Place or Country, but in all Places, where-soever two or three are met together in our Saviour's Name, with the Faith and Charity, and other Affections and Dispositions of Christians, in the Manner as we are taught in the *New Testament*, and as the ancient Christian Church practised, we are assured he is in the Midst of all such Assemblies of Men, in a very peculiar Manner, hears, and assists, and answers, and grants their Prayers, and blesses the Ordinances he hath instituted to the Purposes of a good and holy Life, and dispenses Grace, and Mercy, and Pardon by them. Of this we are not only assured from the Text, but from many other Places of holy Writ. In our Saviour's last Words to the Apostles we are taught this, *Lo I am with you always, to the End of the World*: Not only with the Apostles in their Teaching, and Baptizing, of which our Lord had before spoken, but with all others who should be lawfully called, and ordained to the same Offices

Offices of administering the Word and Sacra-
ments: For you see this Promise of his
Presence is unto the End of the World,
which must comprehend all their true Suc-
cessors as well as themselves.

The same Thing is, in Effect, asserted in
all other Places of the *New Testament*, where
the Spirit of God is promised to the out-
ward Preaching of the Christian Doctrine.
This Spirit, we are assured, supplies the
Room of our Saviour's bodily Presence,
and acts in his Stead, and testifies to the
Truth of his Doctrine, is for ever the Re-
prover of Sin, the Comforter, the Author
of all Good, and is so absolutely necessary
that without its Help, all outward Means,
all Preaching, Sacraments, would signify
just nothing: Neither ever did we, or will
any Man believe the Christian Religion,
pray, perform any Duty acceptably to God,
without its Influence: For there is nothing
good in the Soul but of this Spirit's plant-
ing, no spiritual Strength, Life, or Light
without it. This lies at the Bottom of all
outward Means, is the Ground of all Suc-
cess and Proficiency in a Christian: And
of what is the *New Testament* fuller, than of
Assurances and Promises of this? And this
is to the same Purpose of our Lord's Pro-
mise in the Text, for where his *Spirit* is there
is he *himself*, and acts by it.

Sermon

X.



Neither hath the Christian Church wanted Experience of all this. Hath not our Saviour made good his Promise in this Particular? Hath not Experience shewn his divine Influence and Presence upon rightly disposed Persons? To what else can be imputed those great, sudden, and extraordinary Conversions at the first Preaching of our Saviour's Doctrine, that one Discourse should gain so many Thousands from their old Religion and Principles, which gratified the Lusts and corrupt Passions of Men, and indulged them in all their natural and wanton Propensities and Inclinations? For Men to quit these without any Prospects of Advantage, or Pleasure, of Fame, or Reputation; yea, in opposition to all these darling Things, with the Hazard and sometimes the Loss of their Estates and Lives; I say, To what can this be imputed? What? To the bare Discourse of the Apostles? Surely no: Not the greatest Orators of the World, not *Demosthenes* nor *Cicero*, whose Skill and Eloquence in speaking, exceeded all others, and have been so admired, ever made such Conquests upon the Minds of Men. And if such Speaking as these Men were capable of, never produced such Effects, were unequal to them, How much less could the *Apostles* bare Discourse do this, which

Neither

Y

I

was

was apparently destitute of all the Arts and Methods of Perswasion. Let any Man read the Discourses of the Apostles, and then make a Judgment, whether they could naturally produce any such Effects; plain, simple, unartful Speeches, without any notable Insinuation or Address, without any Pomp of Words, or Height, or Elevation, or Delicacy of Thought or Expression, or fine Cadence; Things naturally apt to work upon the Passions, and yet to see this plain Discourse have such Effects! Thus to captivate Wise and Foolish, Learned and Ignorant, what must this be imputed to, but a divine Assistance and Energy, which shewed the Truths the Apostles and first Christians preached, in such a clear Light to the Understandings of Men, that they could not resist them. This was at first for the Honour of the Christian Religion, to shew its divine Original and Authority, and what ordinarily is not now to be expected; and yet, through the peculiar Goodness of God, for the Merits of his Son, and the Honour of the Christian Religion, I hope still, as bad as the Christian Church is, as indisposed as Men are, we are not void of all Testimony and Experience of our Saviour's Presence and Influence among us. Are none of you verily convinced and perswaded of the Truth of the

X.

Sermon Religion ye profess? Do none of you believe, and expect our Saviour's second Coming to Judgment, and endeavour to be of the Number that he shall acquit and reward? Hath Preaching and other Means and Ordinances of the Christian Religion, reduced none of you from the Error of your Ways? God forbid! What a high Disparagement were this, both to our selves and to the Christian Religion? How unlike *this*, to the primitive Times? and I hope better Things of you; I hope many of you can testify, that your Attending here hath wrought on you a greater Abhorrence of Sin, a greater Care about your Souls, a real Conversion of Heart and Mind, and all such are real Evidences of our blessed *Lord's Presence* with his *Church*, and with his Word and Ordinances.

And as to others, upon whom the Word and the Ordinances of God have not so great, and so entire Effect, is not that owing to themselves? May I not appeal to the Consciences of many such, who come but with tolerable good Intentions, with any Sort of Devotion, have they not been now and then sorely pressed? Hath not Sin, and the Consequences of it, now and then, been shewed to them in very dismal Colours? Have not some sudden Thoughts, Fears, Resolutions seized them, about the

Unrea-

Unreasonableness, and dangerous Consequences of their Actions? Have not their Consciences, now and then, testified to the Truth of what is spoken? Have they not charged them, upbraided them, boded Evil to them, in the Courses they are in? I doubt not this, no, not of most Men who frequent the Ordinances of the Christian Religion, and put themselves in the Way of the divine Assistances; and all these too give Testimony against themselves, and of the Truth of our Lord's Presence in his Church; for hereto is all this to be imputed.

I come now, in the *Last Place*, to make some Inferences from the Whole, by Way of Application.

And *First*, This sheweth us the Divinity of the *Son* of God, that he is, as our *Creeds* set forth, of the same divine Nature, and Substance with the *Father*. This not only appeareth from his possessing the divine Attributes, from his being every where present in all the Assemblies of the Faithful, as God the *Father* is, but more especially from his assuming to himself such peculiar Offices and Prerogatives as can agree only to the divine, and eternal Nature. What more peculiar to the Deity

Sermon than to be in the Midst of all Christian Societies, to hear their Prayers and their Praises, and bless, and answer, and reward them? How frequently is this ascribed to God in Scripture? and yet our Lord says, *I will be in the Midst of them.* Is not this too high a Style for any Creature? Is not this like God? Neither doth our Saviour only here, but at many other Places, join himself with God the Father. *If a Man love me he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Were it not bold and presumptuous in any Creature, thus to join himself to the Creator, in Matters of the highest and divinest Nature, in occupying and possessing the Heart and Soul, in enlightening and comforting it? Who is this that takes Possession of the Heart with God, and concurs in the noblest Acts towards its Happiness, Life, Illumination, and Immortality? Who is this that is in the Midst of all true Christian Churches? Surely it can be nothing less than God, or one who has the same divine Essence or Nature!

And, without all Controversy, this is the true Christian Faith, as we are taught to believe, and profess at many other Places. As, *I and my Father are One*, not one Person, but one Thing, as the Original imports;

One

One in Essence, and Nature. *I am in the Sermon*
Father, and the Father in me. That is, the *X.*
 same divine and eternal Nature possesses us
 both: And then it follows, very easily and
 naturally, that wheresoever the *Son* is, there
 is the *Father*; and wheresoever the *Spirit*
 of God is, there is both *Father* and *Son*.
 And this gives a very easy Solution of
 that Variety with which this Matter is ex-
 pressed in Scripture, *where*, sometimes the
Father, sometimes the *Son*, sometimes the
Holy Spirit is said to be *present*, or to *act*;
 which maketh no Difference; when these
three Persons are but *One in Essence*, and
 where either of these are, the divine Nature
 is, or the blessed *Trinity*.

Secondly, Is our Lord in the Midst of all
 true Christian Assemblies? This we have
 heard, this we profess to believe; and in-
 deed if this were not so, we are collected
 together to very little Purpose. But how
 seldom, and by how few is this seriously
 considered? And yet, What is more neces-
 sary, more profitable, and useful? Let us
 reflect a little upon this, and we shall find
 it not without Advantage in many re-
 spects.

1. Should we not strongly, deeply possess
 our Minds with this, before we approach

Sermon Christian Congregations? Should we not
 X. ask our selves, with all Serioufness, whom
 we expect to meet there? Under whose
 especial Sight and Observation we are putting
 our selves? With what Intentions
 and Purposes we go? Is there no *Being*
 there, but Creatures of our own Kind?
 Were this so, indeed, we should have nothing
 to do, before we approach the Church,
 but to appear before our *Toilets*, and
Glasses, but to deck, and adorn our Bodies,
 that we might recommend our selves to one
 another; but when we consider, that there
 is a great and invisable King *there*, who
 inspects our Hearts and Minds, and more
 or less values us according to their good
 or bad Frame, should not this engage us
 to other Duties, to Prayer, and Considera-
 tion? Should not this teach us more to
adorn our *Souls* than our *Bodies*? We go
 to Church, but to what Purpose? Is it to
 be *seen* by Men, or to be *blessed* by our
 Saviour? Is he in good Earnest there? Is
 this our Belief? Care we not therefore how
 we appear before him, with what Unfit-
 ness, with what unholy Thoughts and In-
 dispositions? Are we under no Awe, no
 Concernment, whether we are approved of
 by him, or not? What Slights are these,
 and how are they consistent with any se-
 rious

rious Apprehensions of his Presence, or Expectations of any Good from him? Sermon
X.

I beseech you to consider this, in your frequenting the Church. Have before your Minds the Company you expect *there*, the Ends you go for, and in the Virtue of which only you are invited and engaged hither. Had you not Promises and Assurances that your Lord was *here*, in a more especial Manner, it were Folly in you to come together: But when we know he is amongst us, when the Motive and Ground of our assembling is to enjoy his Presence, his Blessing, his Assistance, what Inconsistency not to remember this in our approaching him, not to make it our great Care and Ambition to appear acceptable in his Sight?

I must take Leave to tell you, that he who does this is the only Man who is likely to profit by the Word and Ordinances of God, because this is the only Man our Lord will own, bless, assist with his Spirit.

2. This lays upon us an equal Care, as to our Carriage and Deportment in the Church of God. Should not the Presence of this Being check in us all wordly, foreign, wanton, and idle Thoughts, and keep us close to the Subject and Business of the Day? Should we not be ashamed, while Prayers are made to him, his Assistance is implored,
his

Sermon his Word explained, to encourage and delight our selves in the most disagreeable Imaginations, to let our Minds loose upon other vain Objects? The Consideration of the actual Presence of our Lord observing us in this Place, and in these Exercises, not only shews us the Absurdity and Impiety of such an Indulgence, but naturally tends to cure it: And a frequent Recollection of this in the Church of God, that we are under the immediate View of our Saviour, that he is in the Midst of us, must recollect and recover us to a better, and more composed Mind.

Our Hearts and our Thoughts are only discernible to this Being, but our outward Carriage and Behaviour is discernible by Man; and when we see some practising all the Airs of Wantonness and Levity, and others encouraging themselves in the utmost Supineness and Slothfulness, Can one believe that such are under any the least Apprehension of the Presence of our Lord? That they make any real Addresses to him, or believe, or hope for any Good from him? Are these Signs of it? A shameful Thing certainly, in the Eyes of Men, and how much more in the Sight of God!

And, Lastly, of what Encouragement and Comfort is this Promise in the Text to the hum-

humble and contrite Christian, who is under a tender Sense of Sin, and his own Infirmities, and Failings, and Unworthiness! Cannot the Belief of the Presence of our Saviour, not only to see, but help our Infirmities, to assist us in the Performance of our Duty, to urge our Prayers and our Unworthiness with his own infinite Merits, I say, cannot this raise, encourage all such? It must, surely, when they consider, that it is not their own Strength, or their own Worthiness that enables them to their Duty, or recommends them to God, but it is the Influence of our Saviour's Spirit, his prevailing Name and Merit that makes their Devotion, their religious Performances of any Consideration or Worth! Without our Lord, we can do nothing. Here therefore we come not only to pray to God, but to be enabled to pray to him acceptably, to obtain that Strength that we are so deeply sensible of the Want of.

In a Word, If we have the Faith of Christians, believe in our Saviour, or love him, or value his Blessings, this will not only inspire us with Care and Seriousness, and other suitable Dispositions, but with Delight and Joy in approaching his Presence: For the Apprehensions of the Presence of him that we love, and admire, naturally produces this; and therefore, with what Rap-

Sermon Rapture did the Saints of old speak of their

X. Going into the House of the Lord? The same Faith will produce the same Effects in all Men, will wear off that Aversion and Indifferency, which is too common, at the especial Presence of God, make publick Prayers and Ordinances, and Times and Days set apart for them, the most pleasant and delightful to us, as well it may, when the Enjoyment of the divine Presence is to be our Happiness for ever!

God grant, therefore, That we may so enjoy his Presence here, so celebrate his Sabbath upon Earth, that we may be admitted into his eternal Rest, and enjoy the clear and blessed Vision of his Perfections and Glory in his heavenly Kingdom! And this we beg in the Name, and for the Sake of his blessed Son Jesus Christ, to whom, &c.



SERMON

334 *Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.*

Sermon as to the Perpetuity and Obligation of it,
 XI. and will afford us, as large Scope, and as
 weighty Arguments, as we can desire, to
 press on Men the frequent and solemn Use
 of it.

And I account my self the more happy,
 and hope for the better Success at present,
 because I am likely to encounter fewer Pre-
 judices, than some other Subjects, in the
 Course of this Lecture, are exposed unto.
 For sober and good Men of all Parties and
 Persuasions, that come here, look upon this
 as a standing Ordinance of our *blessed Sa-
 viour*, as an admirable Means of Piety and
 a good Life, and what they themselves wish
 was more frequented, and which some with
 great Zeal have endeavoured to promote:
 And I wish all such Men would take no-
 tice, as they ought to do, I think, in Ju-
 stice to the Honour of this Lecture, and its
 pious FOUNDER; that practical Religion
 is not unconsulted and omitted in this De-
 sign, but is the direct Mark of many
 of its Subjects, in which it strikes in
 with the real Inclinations, I hope, or at
 least, with the Talk of Men who have
true Reformation, and the Advancement of
our Saviour's Kingdom in view. This, in
 my Opinion, should take off the Edge of
 Prejudice with all such Men, I mean with
 all true Lovers and Followers of publick
 Ordi-

Ordinances, when they see one of the **Sermon**
Greatest, most Useful, most Sacred of them **XI.**
made a Topick of Discourse, and pressed and
recommended with all imaginable En-
deavour.

To which End, that I may contribute
what I can, I shall shew you,

First, That this Ordinance is bound upon
us by the positive Command of our Sa-
viour himself.

Secondly, That the Nature of the Ordi-
nance it self, when well considered and
understood, will open to us our Duty
and Obligation in this Particular.

Thirdly, That the Practice of the *Primi-
tive Christians* will farther enforce upon
us frequent Communion.

I. This Ordinance is bound upon us by the
positive Command of our Saviour himself. The
Words our Saviour used in the Institution
of it, are preserved by no less than three
of the *Evangelists*, a plain Argument to me,
that the Spirit of God, which influenced the
Faculties of these Writers, esteemed it a
Duty of very uncommon Moment, and in-
tended to bind it upon all the Disciples of
our

336 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon *our Saviour*, with the highest and firmeſt

XI.

Authority: For if a Duty once plainly enjoined in Sacred Writ, lays Obligations ſtrong enough upon every Man to obey it, who owns the *Scripture* to be the Word and Will of *God*, how much ſtronger muſt the Obligation be, when it is frequently enjoined? and how much a greater Violation of the divine Authority and the ſacred *Scripture* muſt the Neglect of it imply? For if any Thing will argue the clear Intent, the undoubted Will of any Supream and Legislative Power, touching any Command or Law, it is the Frequency of its being enacted; which Advantage, you ſee this *Duty* or *Ordinance* unqueſtionably hath.

The high Conſequence and Obligation of this *Ordinance* is to me, farther plainly proved, from the Manner in which it was derived to the Apoſtle *St. Paul*: For he being not with the Reſt of the *Apoſtles*, when our Saviour inſtituted and enjoined it, being afterwards miraculoſly added to their Number, and high Order and Office, as he learnt not the other Parts of the Chriſtian Doctrines and Myſteries from the Apoſtles, ſo neither did he this: How then? You read, *Verſe 23*, he received it of the Lord; that is, by direct and immediate Inſpiration. And what muſt hence be inferred? Certain-

Certainly, by every Man in his right Mind and Senses, the Weight and Consequence of this Ordinance. For if direct and immediate Inspiration will not argue the Will of God, as to any Duty, What will? If this cannot be trusted to, or depended upon, What can? So that believing the Apostle St. Paul, touching his own Inspiration as to the present Duty, it must be esteemed an Ordinance, which the *Holy Spirit* would have continued and frequented; or else it must follow, that real divine Inspiration is no certain infallible Signification of the divine Will; which Supposition not only destroys the Authority of all Revelation, I mean the *Sacred Scriptures*, but of all new Lights too, even if granted True and Divine, and so *Old* and *New* will have the self-same Fate, and fall together. But of this, if I have Time, more hereafter.

Yet farther to the Purpose: Not a little Force, as to the Obligation of this Ordinance, may be drawn from other Circumstances, especially from the Time when it was instituted and enjoined, namely, just before our *Lord's Crucifixion* and Death; a Time in which, usually, the most earnest Desires of the Soul are expressed, and to which we commonly pay the greatest Attention and Regard; and especially if we have any great Opinion of the Friendship

Sermon

XI.

or Wisdom of the Person, just ready to take his last Leave; for all light and trivial Requests are then usually banished, and the Soul labours and struggles about nothing but what is vehemently the Object of its Desires: And if a Command or a Request issues from a Man then, for certain it is accounted by him a Matter of no Indifference; and so all Men apprehend and take it, and are under a Sort of sacred Dread, I had almost said, Devotion to fulfil it. I cannot but again repeat the Substance of what I before said, That the parting, the last, the dying Words of a Man, and especially if he be a Man we admire, reverence, and love, usually make a firm Impression, and if we can forget These, we shall hardly remember any Thing of Him, all Memory of the Man is gone. Now it was this critical Point of Time our Lord chose, to enjoin this Command upon his Disciples and Followers. I cannot but think he too well understood human Nature, not to intend hereby some especial Recommendation of it; he was just ready to be offered; to suffer the Wrath of God in their Stead; and for this, and for many other high and unparalleled Benefactions and Kindnesses, that he had conferred upon them, he supposes they would esteem him their Friend, their Benefactor, and Saviour: He had done enough,

for

for certain, to render his Person dear to them; and now, at Parting, he recommends a Duty, he recommends an Ordinance, he leaves his last, his dying Command and Request; and will we not observe it? What? And yet call our selves Christians! And yet profess Love and Gratitude to the Person crucified at *Jerusalem*? Yet acknowledge the Merit of his Sacrifice and Death? Monstrous black Ingratitude! I stand amazed to think, how hard it will be for Men to make out their Love to the *Son of God* at the last Day, who either reckon this Ordinance frivolous, or else live in a shameful Neglect of it: An Ordinance instituted with that Solemnity, so nicely directed to work upon our Affections, if we have any, yea, or Faith, or Gratitude to the *Son of God*. May not one doubt, (and judge you if it be not reasonable) whether Men can well be supposed to mind our *Lord's* other Words, his other Advices and Commands, when they can so easily neglect, or forget his last dying One's.

Especially if we consider, Idly, *The Nature of this Ordinance*. And here I shall purposely avoid all nice and critical Disputes, that have been raised about it, and only remark, what the inspired Pen-men, I think, very clearly and plainly suggest:

340 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon I shall not collect every Thing, that is
 XI. Matter of clear Revelation, touching this
 Ordinance, but only such Parts of it, as
 shew its Perpetuity and Continuance, and
 consequently our Obligations to frequent it,
 which is my Scope and Mark, and from
 which I would not much wander. To this
 Purpose I shall intreat you to observe,

1st, The Aim or End, our Lord had in
 instituting of it, and binding it upon his
 Followers.

2dly, The Benefits, which the worthy Par-
 takers thereof receive.

3dly, The Duties or Graces, that the Na-
 ture of it unavoidably suggests, and contri-
 butes to influence Men with. And

1st, The Aim and End, which our Lord
 had in instituting of it, and binding it upon his
 Followers. And this is, at many Places of
 the *New Testament*, plainly expressed. Our
 Saviour himself places this in the Words of
 the Institution, and makes it a most endear-
 ing Motive to the Observance of it. *Do
 this*, says he, *in Remembrance of me*: If we
 ask, What, concerning this blessed Person,
 this Ordinance should serve to incite the
 Remembrance of? We may answer, without
 doubt, of every Thing recorded of him.
 For there is nothing he did or said, but is
 very

very worthy of Remembrance; his Incarnation, his Miracles, his Doctrines, his holy Life, and what not? And indeed there is a very near Connexion between the Actions of our blessed Saviour, between the Objects of our Faith concerning him, and our Thoughts will easily and almost unavoidably pass from one Thing to another; in which they will not wander, while they have him for their Subject, nor be unprofitably spent. But of all the Topicks of divine Contemplation, of all the Actions of *our Saviour's* Life, none, for Benefit, Advantage, and Love, will so surprize and amaze us, as his Sufferings and Death. So that this Subject, if any, will arrest, will fix our Thoughts, will stop our Flight, will swallow us up, and overwhelm us. And therefore this being the most especial Act of Goodness and Love; that which crowned all the Rest, made them all beneficial to us, that for which especially he himself was crowned, and in Virtue of which all his true Followers, as the Apostle assures us, are crowned too: It was therefore fit and necessary, that *this*, more especially, should be commemorated, never be forgotten; and to the Keeping of *this* fresh and lively in our Minds this Ordinance was instituted: So the *Apostle* here assures us, that this *Sacrament* is more especially a Commemoration of his Sufferings

Sermon and Death. *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye shew forth the Lord's Death till he come.* And so our Saviour, in the Institution, hath signified; *This Bread is my Body, and this Cup my Blood,* the Representations of both, the Way that I pitch upon to perpetuate, amongst my Followers, a Remembrance of my Love, in the Sacrifice I am going to make of my self for the Sins of the whole World.

Now, I suppose, it will be confessed by all Men, that nothing can give us so good a Light, as to the perpetual Nature of any Ordinance or Command, as the End, for which it was instituted: If the End, for which an Ordinance was instituted, ceases, there is all the Reason in the World to believe, that the Ordinance must cease too: For, assuredly, the infinitely good and wise God, doth not at first ordain Ordinances without Regard to the good Ends for which they are calculated, neither continue them when these Ends fail; for then they would be ordained and continued uselessly. Hence it is, that all the *Jewish Ordinances, Sacrifices,* and the like, cease, because, both *Old and New Testament* clearly inform us, the End of their Institution being only to shadow out, and prefigure the *Gospel-times* in general, and particularly the grand Sacrifice of the *Son of God*, when actually the Things signi-

signified by them were fulfilled, *our Saviour* Sermon
 born, and crucified, risen from the Dead, XI.
 and ascended into Heaven, they all ceased
 of Course, had no longer any Reason, End,
 nor Foundation for their Continuance and
 Use: And marvellous Ignorance and Un-
 skilfulness did some of the first *Jewish Pro-*
selytes discover in their *own* as well as *Chri-*
stian Religion, in attempting to preserve
 them under the *Christian Dispensation*. Thus
 it is, I say, when the Reason and End of
 Ordinances are temporary, failable, or mu-
 table. But when it is otherwise; when the
 Reason and End of the Institution is per-
 petual, it will always bind us; it will be
 as useful, as needful to observe it in after
 Ages, yea, perhaps, more than when it
 was first Instituted. Now the Reason and
 End of this Ordinance, the View *our Sa-*
viour had in it, if we will believe him, was
 to continue in Men the Remembrance of
 Himself, of his Love, his Sufferings and
 Death. But what then? Certainly it fol-
 lows as clearly as any Demonstration, that
 if Men will invalidate the Authority of
 this Ordinance, they must say, That the
 End of the Institution ceases, or, in other
 Words, That *our Saviour* is not to be re-
 membered in After-Times, and particular-
 ly in this Age. This the Deniers of the
 Ordinance must say, and, What a Thing

344 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon were this to be said? Again: Such as neglect this Ordinance, although they own the
 XI. Obligation of it, must urge in their Defence, if they will urge any Thing to the Purpose, That although *our Lord's Sufferings* and *Death* are to be remembered, yet not often; not above twice or thrice in the Year; only Occasionally; and What a Thing were this to be said too? These are Things, for certain, that no Man professing, under what extravagant Form soever, the *Christian Religion*, will openly say, for meer Shame: And yet, What can they say better? Doth not *our Saviour* ground the Reason and End of this Ordinance upon a never-ceasing Obligation? Upon a Remembrance of himself? And when will the Time come in which he is not to be remembered at all; or to be remembered but seldom? I am afraid, indeed, the Time is now come, wherein many have but little remembrance of him, or his Sufferings, or of any Thing he said or did. But who are they? Certainly *Atheists, Deists, Heathens*, any Thing rather than true *Christians*. All others, for certain, will reckon themselves under the most powerful Obligations to remember their *Redeemer*, and the oftner the better, in an Ordinance of his own Appointment.

I might

I might farther urge, with great Strength of Reason, that these latter Ages of the World, instead of being dispensed with, as to the Attendance on this Ordinance, are more strongly and frequently obliged to it; and this still appears from the End of its Institution, which was always to preserve in Men a deep, a grateful, a lively Sense of our Lord's *Sufferings* and *Death*; and it will be confessed, that nothing is so likely to wear out the Sense and Remembrance, even of the greatest Benefits and Benefactors, as Length of Time, and consequently, this being our Case, we living very remotely from the Time, wherein this infinite Benefit was conferred, from the *Crucifixion* of our *blessed Saviour*, it follows, that we, of all People, are most likely to forget it; and consequently, that Length of Time, instead of exempting us from the Use of this Ordinance, binds it more upon us (unless it be our Minds and Intents, which God forbid! to drop the Memory of the *Son of God*) and vastly better Plea for this Omission might former Ages, yea the *Apostolical Age*, have had, than ours; because they lived nearer this great Fact, when it was fresh and lively in Mens Minds, and could not easily be forgotten; and yet we never hear that the first Ages, the first *Christians* dropt it as useless or unnecessary, or fancied themselves

346 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon selves at Liberty about it. How strange
 XI. therefore is it, that we should? But I only
 hint this, and proceed,

2dly, The *Benefits*, which worthy Partakers receive in this Ordinance, will farther recommend it to us, and this we shall best know from the plain Words of him that commanded it. And what doth he say? He tells us first of the *Bread*, that it is *his Body given for us*; and then of the *Cup*, that it is *his Blood*, that was *shed for us*; now by this we must understand, either that the *Bread* and *Wine* are really and substantially converted into the *very Body* and *Blood* of our *Saviour*, and that in the *Sacrament* we literally and really eat his *Body* and drink his *Blood*, (which is the absurd Opinion of the *Roman Church*, than which, certainly no Religion in the World ever offer'd or imposed upon Men's Understandings or Faith a more contradictory impossible Article;) or else we must believe, that in partaking of this Sacrament worthily, we partake of all the *Benefits* and *Advantages* of his *Body* and *Blood*, all that the *Sacrifice* of his *Death* procured, that all those *Blessings* of the *New Testament* are annexed to a worthy Partaking of this Ordinance. So St. Paul, when he speaks of this Ordinance, argues, *The Cup of Blessing, which we bless, is it not*
 the

the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Sermon
 Bread, which we break, is it not the Communion XI.
 of the Body of Christ? 1 Cor. x. 16. In which,
 certainly, he instructs us, that, some Way
 or other, we are Partakers of Christ's Body
 and Blood in the Sacrament. And I see no
 Medium, if we partake not of his real and
 substantial Body and Blood, we must partake
 of the Benefits and Blessings, the Effects
 which his Body and Blood procured: And
 so I think, generally, Protestants hold. But
 why doth the Apostle here call it the Cup of
 Blessing? Without doubt, with regard to the
 Action of our Saviour in instituting this Or-
 dinance, wherein he blessed or consecrated
 these outward Elements, the Bread and Wine,
 to these spiritual and sacred Purposes. As
 in our Action of giving Thanks, or desir-
 ing a Blessing upon our daily Food, is im-
 ply'd and requested, that God, the Author
 of it, would, by his Blessing, render it ca-
 pable of answering the Ends for which it
 was ordained, namely, that it may be the
 Support of our natural Life; so, what can
 this Action of Blessing in the Sacrament sig-
 nify, but setting the Bread and Wine apart,
 enabling it to attain the spiritual Ends and
 Designs of it? And what are those Ends?
 We have heard before; even no less than
 all the Blessings and Mercies that the Sacri-
 fice of our Saviour's Death procured, Par-
 don,

348 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon

XI.



don and Forgiveness of our Sins, spiritual Life and Strength, and whatsoever Priviledges the Gospel confers; For all these the Son of God, by the Merit of his Sufferings and Death, obtained; and whatsoever was purchased by this great and real Sacrifice, is conferred upon all who duly and worthily partake of his sacramental Body and Blood: For they partake of the Effects of his Passion, of the Blessings and Mercies of it herein, or else how do they partake of his Body and Blood, as they are said to do in this Ordinance? And hence, in the very Institution, it is added by our Saviour, *This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you, and for many, for the Remission of Sins.*

Hence it is not any Wonder that the early Fathers of the Christian Church, valued this Ordinance at so high a Rate, that they deemed it so sacred, that they placed so great a Stress upon it: For it appeared to them the great Means of Pardon of Sin, of spiritual Grace and Assistance, in a Word of eternal Life: For it is truly that Bread, that came down from Heaven, which makes us truly immortal, that unites us to God our Saviour, and one another, in a spiritual Manner, and to which, I doubt not (whatever others think) but that our Lord, had some Regard, in that Discourse in St. John's Gospel,

Gospel, of *Eating his Flesh, and Drinking his Blood*: For, much after the same Manner, do the succeeding *Christians* deliver their Thoughts about this Ordinance: St. Ignatius calls it the *Bread of God*, a high Title certainly, that *whereby the Soul is nourished to eternal Life*: And St. Irenaus, in treating of this Mystery, imputes unto it not only the *blessed immortal Life of the Soul*, but even the *Resurrection of the Body*. And this will not surprize us at all, if we consider the firm Belief and Doctrine of those Times (and they were Times too, immediately succeeding the *Apostles*) which was, that the *Sacrament* was a Representation of *our Lord's Death and Crucifixion*, upon which all the Benefits of the *New Testament* were founded, it being instituted in Remembrance of the beloved *Son of God*, and of the *Sacrifice* he made for the Sins of the whole World, which *Sacrifice God the Father* accepted, and upon the Score of which he received Man into Grace and Favour. Hence it was, that *God the Father* looked most auspiciously upon this Ordinance, and all worthy Partakers of it, that it was the most acceptable Service they could perform, averted the divine Wrath and Judgments, procured Pardon of Sin, the divine Favour and Grace: In fine, was an actual Application of the Mercies and Benefits, that the real

Sermon Sacrifice of this Son obtained, to the Soul of

XI.

every worthy Receiver; of which this Ordinance, I say, is an outward Representation, and therefore is accompanied with spiritual and real Effects that answer it, that are denoted and signified to the Sense by it, and so our Church explains it, makes it the *Life of the Soul*, as *Bread and Wine* is of the *Body*.

2dly, The *Duties* and *Graces* which this Ordinance, in its own Nature, unavoidably suggests, and contributes to influence Men with, farther recommend it to us: What one Grace, what one Virtue is a *Christian* bound to exercise, that this Ordinance doth not directly tend to promote? Truly I know none. I will instance in some few, and be as brief as ever I can, leaving much to your own Consideration.

The great Principle of *Holiness* and *Salvation*, according to the Terms of the *Gospel*, is always *Faith* in the *Son of God*: For hereby we are justified: Now, who, endow'd with common Sense, that apprehends Religion of any Consequence to him at all, will not conceive himself obliged, in approaching this Ordinance, to examine himself, as the *Apostle* here bids him, touching his *Faith* in, his Dependance on the *Son of God*? Who will not think himself bound, that

that understands or believes any Thing of the Matter, to revive in himself this Grace, and exert it, as much as possible, on the proper Object of it, to raise in himself, and affect his Soul with, as deep a Sense of our Saviour's Merits and Love, of his Sufferings and Death, as he can? For what doth a Man profess to do in this Ordinance? I have often said already, thankfully to commemorate the Love of God and our Saviour, demonstrated in his Crucifixion and Death. It is an outward Representation of his Sufferings and Death, and the Benefits which we receive thereby: Now, What a wanton, nay, horridly prophane Thing were it, for any Man to presume at commemorating our Saviour's Death in this Ordinance, who, in his Heart, believes not in him, has no extraordinary Opinion of his Person, or Doctrine, or Sufferings, has no Dependance upon either? It is true, indeed, temporal Motives, Honours and Preferments, may sometimes bring even Infidels to the Lord's Table, of which I have nothing here to say, unless it be to caution such daring Men, how they play and jest with holy Things, with our blessed Saviour's Body and Blood: Advancements procured by trifling with the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, whatsoever they think now, may one Day cost them dear, as we see the Abuse of this Ordinance did some

Sermon

XI.



some in this very *Chapter*. But whatsoever Men of no Religion at all may think, I dare say, others, in any tolerable Measure affected with it, will account a lively Faith in the *Son of God*, a great Esteem of his Person and Benefits, a necessary Qualification worthily to approach this Ordinance; and consequently will make it their Business to improve this Grace in themselves. And what if they often frequented this Ordinance? According to the Sense of it, which they have upon them, they would often examine themselves, they would often consider the Motives and Grounds of their Belief, they would often have our *Saviour's Love*, his *Sufferings*, his *Death*, under serious Consideration; and what would this do? By the Grace of *God*, so imprint the Objects of Faith upon their Minds, render their Belief so active, lively, and powerful, as to enable them to walk by it, as did the *Primitive Christians*.

What shall we say of *Sorrow* and *Abhorrence of our Sins*, of *universal Love and Charity*? They are all great Duties: And surely very poorly instructed must we be in the Nature and Design of the *Holy Sacrament*, not to discern the Tendency it hath to promote them all. For if we come in any Degree qualified to this Ordinance; must it not inspire us with *Hatred* and *Detestation of Sin*,

Sin, to remember, and, in a Manner, see the Wrath of God poured out for it upon his own Son? Must it not teach us Charity and Love, when we see the Love of our Saviour to us all, in the Representation of his Crucifixion and Death? When as the Apostle St. Paul expresses it, *we, being many, are one Bread, and one Body, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread?* When we are considered in relation to one another, as Members of the same Body, and belonging to the same Head, influenced, animated, directed by the same Spirit, as by one universal Soul, to celebrate the most stupendous Act of Love with Malice and Hatred in our Hearts, What a monstrous Inconsistency and Indignity! And doth it, *Lastly*, less tend to kindle in us a suitable Return of Love and Gratitude to God and our Saviour? What? When his Crucifixion and Death are so lively represented and displayed in this Ordinance? But, I am sensible, I shall be tedious in Points so clear and plain; but I hope, it will be excused, when ye consider, that the Contempts thrown upon this Ordinance have made it in some measure necessary.

Let us see then the *Third and Last Thing* to recommend this Ordinance, the Practice of the *Primitive Christians*: And, how zealous, how constant, how frequent they were

354 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon in this Ordinance, the Scriptures, as well as
 .XI. the Writings of the Primitive Fathers, will
 very clearly shew us: I begin with the Scriptures, as being of
 the surest and most unquestionable Authority in this, and all other Cases. And methinks, St. Paul is very plain here, as to the
 Practice of the Church in this Particular, his Charge at the 17th Verse, against the
 Corinthians, is, that they came together, not
 for the Better, but for the Worse. What this
 Coming together was, is explained in the following Verse. For when, says the Apostle, ye come together in the Church; so that this
 coming together, was Meeting in a Body, according to the Custom of all Christians, to
 celebrate publick Worship. But there was a grievous Fault in their Coming together, and wherein lay it? In the Abuse of this
 Ordinance: Which looks, as if it was then made a constant Part of divine and publick
 Worship, otherwise the Apostle's Charge, of their Coming together for the Worse, would not so universally hold against them: As much as if the Apostle had said, Ye come together, or to the Church, for the Worse, and one of the Congregation had asked him, Why? Because ye celebrate not aright the
 Lord's Supper. Which, I think, implies, that their Coming together, or, as we express it, going to Church, supposed this Ordinance

to be used in their Assemblies, as Part of di-
vine and publick Worship: In which, be-
ing erroneous, they were erroneous in pub-
lick Worship: For their Fault lay in the
Abuse of the *Sacrament*, and this inferred a
Fault in their Coming together. But it is
unnecessary thus to argue, when we have
Texts direct, and full to the Purpose. I wish
you would all hear and remember in what,
St. *Luke* tells you, the Piety and Religion
of the first Converts consisted, *Acts* ij. 42.
*And they continued stedfast in the Apostles
Doctrine and Fellowship, and in Breaking of
Bread, and in Prayers.* Surely, a most full
and perfect Description of the Practice of a
true *Christian*. They stood first, firm and
unshaken in their Belief of the *Apostle's*
Doctrine, or as we now express it, held all
the *Articles of the Christian Faith*. And
why did they do this? Because otherwise
they had been such Men, as the Word and
Church of God, in all Ages, hath termed
Hereticks. They next continued as stedfast
in the *Apostles Fellowship*, that is, they held
Communion with them. And why did they
make such Conscience of this too? Because
otherwise the *Sacred Scripture*, and the
Church of God would have deem'd them
Schismaticks. And lastly, in *Breaking of Bread,*
and *Prayer*, as being indispensable Duties,
and the greatest Means of holy Living.

XI.

356 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon Would we make the first *Christians* our Pattern? I hope so: For where can we find a Better? Imitate them therefore, in these Branches of true and unfeigned Piety. The Custom of the *Apostolical Churches* touching the Sacrament, is farther declared at the 46th *Verse* of the same *Chapter*; at *Chap. xx. v. 7.* and several other Places.

But lest the Practice of the *Apostles*, and first *Christians* should be deem'd too holy for us to follow and imitate, (for so it is, Men will often have something to say or fancy to any Examples we can alledge; if they be drawn from the *Apostles*, Men be ready to conceit, that these were such Heights of Piety, that they may be well now excused from following them; if from latter Times, these are Dregs, these are Popish, so that all are too good or too bad, all are too holy or too superstitious to work any Effect upon Men :) I will shew you that, this Custom of receiving the *Sacrament* did not presently vanish in the *Church of God*. In *Justin Martyr's* Time it was administer'd at least every *Sunday*, as he expressly says, in his first excellent *Apology*; and it was not frequented by a Few, but even by such as lived in the Country then resorted to it, whatsoever they did at other Times, even all that were baptized, and had passed thro' other Methods of Approbation, which, in those Times,

Of Frequenting the Holy Communion. 357

Sermon

XI.

Times, all *Christians* submitted to, and which gave free Admission to this great and holy Ordinance; I believe it was administered oftener in the Church then, but of this that *Father* doth not take notice. He spake rather of its Administration on *Sundays*, when it was more universally frequented by the Faithful: For I must tell you, in those Days, (I speak it not without Authority) for a *Christian* Man, without extraordinary Reason, to come to Church, and turn his Back upon the *Sacrament*, was accounted monstrous; and he must not do so often without Observation, yea without Censure of the *Church of God*, without being accounted no extraordinary Member of it. In the Times of *St. Cyprian*, he says, it was administered every Day; the same Accounts you have from other Fathers of good Note.

But to this, I am aware, an Objection is obvious; you will say, without doubt, If the Custom of *Churches* were thus, and every Professor received the *Sacrament*, if not every Day, yet at least every *Sabbath-day*, and if Christians were numerous; then, according to the Proportion as they are now, they must be receiving the *Sacrament* all Day long, and there would be Time for little else both for *Minister* and *People*. To this I will answer, altho' I doubt I shall not get much.

358 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion,

Sermon much Good-will by it; yet, because I know it
 XI. to be Truth, *that*, thro' the Blessing of God,
 shall bear me out with the most Prejudiced.
 Well then, I must tell you, and believe
 me I tell you Truth, not for my own sake,
 but yours: In those Days Mens Zeal, Mens
 Devotion, Mens Charity was great, and, on
 the contrary, Mens Lusts, Mens Vanity,
 Mens Pride, Envy, Covetousness, was lit-
 tle; and the happy Consequence of this
 was, that, instead of being at such mighty
 Difficulties to maintain *one* Pastor, Churches
 of any great Consequence and Extent, main-
 tained *several*, several Deacons, at least, be-
 longed to the same Church; which made
 this frequent Administration of the *Sacra-*
ment extreamly easy, both to Minister and
 People: And yet were the Clergy idle? It
 will not become me to speak much of that,
 yet, I may say, it doth not appear from the
 History of those Times: Which must either
 argue, that the People were under no such
 great Dreads, as to the Idleness of their
 Clergy, not so ready to tax them with it,
 or else that they deserved no such Accusa-
 tion: But, indeed, how the *Sacrament* now
 should be administred, according to the
Primitive Pattern, every Day, or every *Sab-*
bath-day, upon the Provision of many
 Churches, I leave to the Consideration of
 every true Christian. I will yet beg your
 Patience

Patience for a Word or two to three Sorts of Sermon Men, by Way of Application, and so conclude. To Men that deny this Ordinance altogether; To others that own it but not frequent it; Lastly, To such as do frequent it.

XI.

First, To Men that deny this Ordinance altogether. Were any such here (which is hardly to be supposed) I would desire them seriously to bethink themselves, and consider, against what clear and weighty Authority they reject this Sacrament, and with what Danger too, I am afraid, to themselves, and their own everlasting Good: What is the Authority they slight in this Case, I have made it my Business here to shew you: No less than the most solemn Command and Injunction of our *blessed Saviour*, and that too founded upon a Motive that can never fail, until the World it self fails, upon a Design and View of perpetuating, amongst his Followers, a lively Sense and Remembrance of his Sufferings and Death: An Ordinance farther, both enjoined and practised by the *Apostles* themselves, and with the greatest Zeal imaginable, and celebrated by the purest Ages of the Church. And if this will not bind upon Men an Ordinance or Duty, I despair of shewing what can. If the Command of our *Saviour* and his *Apo-*

360 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon *fls*, together with their own Practice, and

XI. the constant Practice of the *Church of God* will not convince a Man, that follows these as his Guides, of any Duty, there seems an End of all Dispute and Persuasion. For no higher can we go, no greater Authority can we have; and can they deny that this is the Case, and that upon these immoveable Foundations this Ordinance stands? Can they deny that our Saviour instituted this Ordinance? No, they pretend not to say it. Can they deny that the *Apostles* likewise, practised and enjoined it upon their Converts? Neither this. What is it then that these Men pretend, or oppose to so great and infallible Authority? Nothing, that I can see, but their own private Light and Spirit. For they tell us *our Saviour* enjoined it, and his *Apostles* practised it, but not with an Intent to have it always continued; but why so? Because greater Light was to arise in After-times in the Hearts of Men, in the Virtue of which this Ordinance was to be dismissed. What? A greater Light to arise, than arose in the *Apostles*? So it seems. But will you believe this? Will you believe, that any Man has now fuller, more perfect Revelations than the *Apostles* had? That any Man has, by Virtue of Inspiration, or of any Light within, or without, an Authority to dismiss the Ordinances of *Jesus Christ*?

Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

361

Sermon
XI.

Christ? God forbid, that such a Delusion should seize any Man! And yet how many hath it seized? What Multitudes hath it drawn from our Church? Should we not therefore be all concerned, as we love our *Saviour* and his *Ordinances*, if we could, to put a Stop to it? To so gross an Infatuation? It is extreamly probable, I speak to Men here of different Persuasions and Opinions; yet, howsoever we differ, I hope, we all agree in this, in loving our *blessed Saviour*, the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*; and if we do this really, must we not all be zealous for his *Ordinances*? Yea, for this very *Ordinance*, that he hath appointed, especially in *Remembrance of Himself*, and in which our Love to him (if we have any) is most especially to appear? So that this is a Thing, in which not only our Church is concerned, but all others; all that love our *Saviour* and his *Ordinances*, all such should be caution'd against those that despise them, and endeavour, what they can, to deliver them from such gross Errors.

But, *Secondly*, Another Sort of Men own the Necessity, Obligation, and Usefulness of this *Ordinance*, and yet neglect it: And the Reasons of this Neglect, probably, are not the same in all. Some are to be pitied, and exhorted, and undeceived with all Tenderness,

Sermon

XI.



derness, that have been frighted about this Ordinance by others Discourse, or else thro' their own melancholy, and distemper'd Imaginations; so that, let them do what they will or can, they can never believe themselves prepared for it, so as to render it to them a Blessing, but rather Damnation or a Curse: These are unreasonable Fears, but how to rid them of them is a hard Matter. Yet if any Thing will do it, it is doubtless Reading such Books, of which Sort are many, that treat of the Nature of this Ordinance, Conversation with judicious and pious Men, and lastly, (if I might be allowed to say so, in a Discourse of this Nature) an Endeavour to recover a better Constitution of Body. These with the Grace of God, might allay such groundless, terrible Images that haunt them.

But the far greater Part, I doubt, refrain from worse Motives. They cannot but know, that the Nature of this Ordinance requires Repentance, Charity, Faith in the Son of God, stedfast Resolutions of an holy and good Life. These are such Terms that, as yet at least, they cannot consent to, they cannot yet make Religion their great and serious Business and End; for they have other Things in view, the Riches and Pleasures of this Life. What shall I say to such Men? I must entreat them to consider, what I be-

Of Frequenting the Holy Communion. 363

I believe, they must needs know already, Sermon
that their Lusts will as certainly destroy XL
them, as an unworthy Receiving the Sacra-
ment; if Men have any Dependance upon
Religion at all. For certain, such a De-
pendance will do them no Good, yea much
Hurt, if they live so as to render them-
selves unfit for receiving the Lord's Supper.
What then? Were it not Wisdom, seeing
by our outward Profession we may make
some Shew of Christianity, so to exercise
and practise it, as that we may reap the Be-
nefits of it, that it may do us real Good at
the Last? Should we fear Strictness of Life,
if we believe our Religion to be true? Fear
that we should be engaged to do that, which
only will make this Religion of any Use to
us? Shameful Folly! And yet this we do;
we abstain from the Sacrament because it
engages us to leave our Lusts, and live con-
formably to the Gospel, which, if we do not
do, what is our Religion worth? What doth
our Profession signify? 'Tis all trifling
without this; and whatsoever Advantages
the Christian Religion brings to others, it
will bring none to us: So that, in this Case,
the Short is, Men fear to be Christians,
Men fear to be happy, and blessed for ever.
I would not for the World, that there should
be any such Men in our Church, and espe-
cially any that appear zealous for it! For,
we

364 Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

Sermon we say, our Church is the Church of Christ; and if so, its Members for certain must love, must diligently and devoutly attend the Ordinances of *Jesus Christ*, as they expect a Blessing on our Church, or themselves. And, O God! Would all the zealous Members of our Church do this! — I will desist — I will say no more — yet I must say this, What a Blessing, What a Defence would it draw down upon It, and our Selves? Then should we have our Lord's Promise, that *not the Gates of Hell*, join'd with the Machinations of the lewd Crew of *Atheists, Deists, and Hereticks*, should be able to prevail against it, or us.

And therefore, *Lastly*, Let me conjure all such of you that frequent this *Ordinance*, That you answer it in your Lives and Conversations, That the Efficacy and Vertue of it may appear in your orderly, peaceable, charitable, and holy Walking and Living; That by contrary Practices you bring not a Scandal upon this great, useful, and holy Institution of our Lord, but shew, that it is a Means of an holy Life, by your holy living as the primitive Christians did, and so retrieve the Honour of this *Ordinance*, and let Men perceive the Advantages of it, by the notable

Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.

365

table Effects it has on such as use it and frequent it.

Sermon
XI.

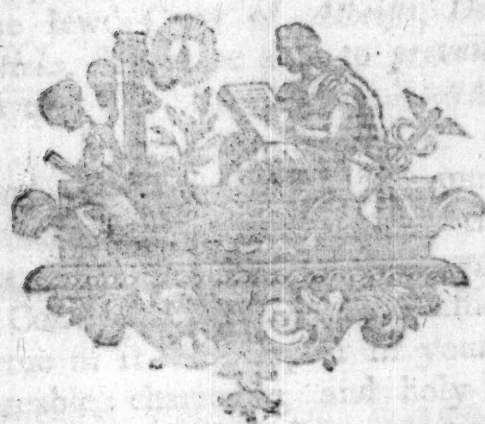
*Which God grant, through the Grace
and Assistance which his Death and
Sufferings obtained. Amen.*



SERMON

Of Frequenting the Holy Communion.
 Table Effects it has on such as use it and Sermon
 frequent it.
 XI.

Which God grant, through the Grace
 and Assistance which his Death and
 Sufferings obtained. Amen.



SERMON

SERMON XII.

On the **PASSION** of our

BLESSED LORD.

HEB. II. 10.

To make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.

Omit the Sufferings of Jesus Christ on the Day which our Church sets apart to commemorate them, I think would be hardly pardonable, and especially when, I hope, the Subject is not less agreeable to the Season, than to the pious Design of the Donor of this Sermon; which was, as I apprehend, to prepare Men for

Sermon
XII.

Sermon for the Receiving of the *Holy and Blessed Sacrament*, or, in other Words, for the Commemorating those very Sufferings duly and worthily, of which the *Sacrament* is a lively Representation, and was ordained by the *Author* of our *Religion* to inspire us with a grateful and deep Sense and Remembrance of.

XII.

Notwithstanding the great Dignity of the *Son of God* above all *Angels*, (which the *Apostle* had been before setting forth,) notwithstanding the infinite Love of the *Father* to him, it was necessary to his Character, and the great, and gracious Design of his Coming into the World, that he should be submitted to great Evils, and Sufferings: And one Reason of this severe Dispensation is fully displayed in the *Text*. *For it became him, saith the Apostle, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.* Our Lord's Vertue was every Way try'd, and amongst the Rest by great, and superlative Sufferings: And as these are the greatest Tryals, so did they shew our Saviour to be a Person of the most perfect, and accomplish'd Vertue, render his Character and Example the most compleat, and illustrious. So that the Particulars which naturally

Sermon

XII

turally offer themselves, from this Clause of Sermon
the Verse, are these three.

XII.

*First, The Matter of Fact here asserted;
the Greatness of our Saviour's Suffer-
ings.*

*Secondly, That those Sufferings shewed the
Son of God to be of the most consummate
Vertue.*

*Thirdly, The particular Observations, or
Reflections which are natural to be
made on his Carriage and Vertues under
Sufferings.*

These are involved together, and mutual-
ly recommend, and set off one another.
The Greatness of his Sufferings displays his
Vertues the more egregiously, and the Great-
ness of his Vertue enhances his Sufferings;
because they make them the more unjust,
and cruel, the more the Object of our Pity,
and Indignation. Suffering Innocency is
certainly the most moving and affecting
Object that human Nature can encounter:
To see a Man of the greatest, and most per-
fect Goodness, Charity, Meekness, and Hu-
mility, slander'd, persecuted, harass'd out
with Evils, and at last cruelly oppressed and
destroyed, is a Spectacle, of all Things, that

Sermon most sensibly cuts, and afflicts the Soul; that
 XII. engages and plunges her in the greatest Variety of Motions, and Passions; insomuch, that I have seen frequently, that even a feigned Relation of these Things will have a notable Effect, draw the Attention after it, surprise the Mind into a Forgetfulness of Truth, and work it into real and unfeigned Sorrow, and Compassion. And surely, if meer Fancies have such Effects, lay such a Charm upon our Spirits, and so captivate us, I should think, we must be very powerfully acted on, in recollecting the base, unworthy, and cruel Treatment that the beloved Son of God our Saviour met with, when he appear'd in our own Nature, and for our Sakes. I begin therefore with,

I. The Sufferings of our blessed Saviour.

His whole Life indeed was little else, if we measure Sufferings by the same Rule, with regard to him as to our selves. For what an Evil do we generally account Poverty and hard Labour? And, I think, there is no great Doubt, that from these our Saviour's Condition exempted him not. Is not this the Carpenter? say the Jews. He was a Man, and God graciously intending to redeem human Race by him, which, by the

Mark vj.

3.

I. Fall,

Fall, lay under the Curse of Difficulty, and Toil for the Support of animal Life; he had a full Share of this, as well as of other Evils; was usher'd into the World, and lived in it, after the Rate, and in the Way of the Meanest of Men, on whom that Curse seems chiefly to light; was indubitably subjected to a painful, laborious Profession and Employment, of which many of the Sons of Adam taste not. And really, this is Matter of just Wonder, or rather, is an amazing Condescension; when so many of the Sons of Men are freed, by the Indulgence of Heaven, from the Effects of that Curse; from Labour and Toil, that He, God's only beloved Son, should not, but chuse, and put himself under, the worst and hardest Condition of human Life; be born, and live under less Advantages than innumerable others, yea, go through all the Difficulties and Hardships of it. Methinks I contemn Riches, and a high Condition, when I think of this, or at least, one would think, a Disciple of his might well digest Labour and Poverty under this Reflection.

Before he publickly appear'd, as the Saviour of the World, how was he persecuted? As soon as born, he was an Object of Hatred, and his precious Life was sought by no less a Person than a King, and innumerable Infants destroy'd, to involve him in

Sermon the Ruin. So that instead of receiving him
XII. as a Saviour, the World seem'd alarm'd against him, as against a common Pest, or the greatest Evil that could invade it; and that he was not, almost, as soon murder'd as born, was entirely owing to an Almighty Hand and Care.

The intermediate Space of his Life, from his Birth to his publick Appearance, seems to have been pass'd in much Obscurity, as the only natural Means to preserve him: And as soon, again, as he presented himself under his real Character; began to preach, and work Miracles, display his Wisdom, and Power, his excellent and divine Vertues, and by these to distinguish, and make himself known as the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, with what Violence were his Persecutions renewed! With what Malice and Rage was he encountered! How was his Goodness traduced, and his Miracles blasphemed! And what Conspiracies were raised against his Fame, and his Life! And what Inventions used to entrap and extinguish both! So that, That he was not destroyed as soon as known; That he subsisted the short Period of, somewhat above, three Years to finish his Ministry; That so powerful a Combination of Envy and Malice had not much sooner cut him off than it did, we
 read,

read, in divers Places, was owing to a miraculous Power, and Preservation.

But as soon as this omnipotent Restraint was gone, and their Rage let loose, they suffer'd him not long; they soon brought on that black, and dismal Tragedy which I hasten, as briefly and as lively as I can, to set before you.

And, in considering, with the utmost Care and Diligence (as it becomes us) these Sufferings of our Lord; it seems to me needful to distinguish them into two Sorts, or range them under two Heads.

Here are some that the History of this horrid Fact contains very clearly and openly; and others that appear of a Kind somewhat different, and seem to have a different and more hidden Cause, and rather more immediately to affect our blessed Saviour's Soul than Body. And the Consideration of both these, in my Opinion, is needful; will give us the most full and lively Representation of what that great, and good, and blessed Person submitted to, and underwent for the Sins of Mankind. Many were the bitter Ingredients that compos'd this Cup, many Causes concurred to make it the more grievous and terrible.

I begin with the First of these, which
The History of our Saviour's Passion very ex-

Sermon pressly and lively describes, as being the
 XII. most obvious, and easy to be perceiv'd. And
 these we shall find full of the greatest Base-
 ness, Treachery, Despite, and Cruelty, that
 Wickedness, Rage, Malice, and the most
 diabolical Passions could inspire Men with.

i. This dismal and horrid Scene opens
 with the Treachery of *Judas*, not only one
 of our *Lord's* Disciples, but Apostles, one
 of the first Rank and Order, who was ad-
 mitted into the most intimate Degree of
 Kindness and Friendship, had always ac-
 companied and conversed with him, had
 seen his Miracles and unparall'd Excel-
 lencies and Vertues, and was chosen by him
 to be a Witness and a Preacher of these
 Things to the World. When the *High Priests*
 and *Rulers* of the *Jews* were under great
 Difficulty how to apprehend him, and exe-
 cute their Malice on him, for Fear of the
 common People, who, they had Reason to
 believe, would protect and defend him
 against any open Assault, this *Judas* (a Name
 of infinite Reproach among Christians) vo-
 luntarily offer'd himself for the Business,
 and made the Matter easy to them, by open-
 ing the Secrets of his Master's Retirement,
 and by betraying him to them without Dan-
 ger, when destitute and alone: And all this
 upon so poor a Reward, as *Thirty Pieces of*
Silver.

Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord. 375

Silver. Good Lord! What a most outrageous Vice is Covetousness, that could inspire Judas with so much Baseness, as to sell, and betray his Lord, Master, and Saviour, upon so mean a Consideration! And when one sees the monstrous Effects of this Passion, how ought one to dread it! Sure a miserable Thing is it to be under its Power and Tyranny. But to proceed.

Sermon
XII.

To compleat this Treachery, the Signal to the Jews, both of our Saviour's Person and Apprehension, must be a Kiss, a Token of the greatest Love and Endearment amongst Men. And our Lord takes Notice of this, as an Aggravation of his Baseness: *Judas, Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss?* A most monstrous Piece of Hypocrisy! and, thus open'd, and detected at the Instant, and so emphatically upbraided by our Lord, one would think, was enough to confound the Actor of it; if Covetousness had not given an Inlet to a greater Power to govern, and transport him.

So that here, we see, the Son of Man was betray'd by a Friend, by a Follower, by an Apostle, by one of the twelve Men, of all the World, that he had singled out, graced, and distinguished by the most peculiar Favours, Trusts, and Employments; in a Word, by one whom he had receiv'd into his Bosom, and what monstrous Ingratitude was

Sermon this! He had *chosen* so small a Number as
 XII.] *twelve* Men, and *one* of them prov'd a Devil!

Treachery and Ingratitude! The Unkindness of Friends and Followers is an affecting Thing. This was foretold as an aggravating Circumstance of our Lord's Sufferings. *It was not an open Enemy*, saith King David in the Person of our Saviour, *that did me this Dishonour; for then I could have born it: But it was even thou, my Companion, my Guide, and my own familiar Friend.* Every Body knows that this is the most afflicting, to fall by the Treachery of Friends, by those we have obliged, trusted, supported, engaged, and cherish'd; the Falsehood of *these* wounds more sensibly than the open Assaults of a profess'd Enemy; and, according to the common Sentiments of human Nature, hath greater Influence upon the Soul. So said *Cæsar*, when he saw his *Brutus* advancing upon him, amongst the Conspirators: *What! Art thou of them? What! Thou, my Son!* Which Sort of Expression confesses a very great Grief, and in no soft, and effeminate Man; And we know a greater Man than *Cæsar*, under a grievous Persecution, could not forbear particularly to mention, amongst his Calamities, that *Demas* had forsaken him, *having loved this present World.*

What *Judas* did, the Rest of the Apostles did, in some degree: In his *Agony* they could

could not watch and pray with him one Sermon
Hour: And, upon his Apprehension, *they all* XII.
forsook him, and fled. What a Condition was

this, that not one Man would own him!
Joh. xvlij. St. Peter, indeed followed afar off,
but upon being question'd, had not the Cou-
rage to own him; but deny'd even with
Oaths, that he had any Relation to, or
Knowledge of him: And all this he did,
notwithstanding he was foretold of it, and
he had professed his Resolution to die with
him, rather than to deny him, in any wise:
And yet this he did not at a Distance, but
in the very Sight of his *Lord, and Master.*
And it was well it was in his Sight, for it
seem'd, the Look of our Lord very much
brought him to Repentance, and himself.
And thus, to be betray'd by the most inti-
mate Friends and Followers; to be deny'd,
forsaken, and left destitute, are aggravating
Circumstances in Misery and Affliction;
what commonly cut deepest, and are most
complained of by the Sufferers. But this is
the Weakness, and Wickedness of his
Friends: Let us turn to the Part, and Car-
riage of his Enemies, and this appears

2. In the Manner of his *Apprehension.* And
this is done with all the Malice and Indig-
nity imaginable. Lo! *Judas* at the Head
of a profane and licentious Multitude, ap-
pointed

Sermon pointed with *Lanterns and Torches*, with
 XII. *Swords and Staves*, in the most rude, insolent, and tumultuous Manner, as if they had been to beset the worst, and most grievous Offender; and so our Saviour reproves them; *Are ye come out, as against a Thief, with Swords, and Staves?* Certainly, it is very strange, that a Person of so surpassing Excellency and Goodness, Charity and Meekness, the Author of so many Miracles, and of so many useful and beneficial Works, the Teacher of so holy and divine Doctrine, in a Word, that the only Son of God, and Saviour of the World should be pursued and apprehended as a Thief, or a Felon; should find no better Reception than *these*, should be placed in *their* List and Number; I say, this is wonderful, and would be enough to imploy our Attention for the whole Time that is allotted me, did not greater Wickedness, greater Exercise of our Lord's Vertue and Patience call us off to consider,

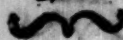
3. The Manner of their *judging, and condemning him*, which is a farther Aggravation of their Injustice and Impiety. When, by the Help of *Judas*, and the Night, and a prophane Rabble, they had achiev'd that which they had been a long Time meditating and contriving; had got him into their Power, and had apprehended him as the
 most

most outrageous Criminal, How did they make good their Charge against him? What Accusation did they alledge in Justification of such violent Proceedings? They had, indeed, oftentimes laid Traps to draw Words from him, which might prove Matter of Accusation; but his infinitely Superior Wisdom and Knowledge, and the abundant Goodness of his Life having defeated them in this, and all other wicked Measures; (his Life being so order'd, that out of it they could pick nothing, that would give any or the least Colour to their malicious Prosecution); this, we see, threw them into great Difficulty and Perplexity, was Matter of deep Consultation: For their Malice aiming at nothing short of his Life, although they had to deal with Pilate, a corrupt Judge; yet for his, as well as their own Honour, there must be an Appearance and Shew of some Crime, and how to effect this, Malice itself could not invent: For, upon the whole Matter, in the Midst of their Rage, nothing that he had said, nothing that he had done, amounted, even in their own malicious Construction, to a Crime, much less to a Crime that could justify the Sentence of Death. Nay, although they encouraged, and suborned false Witnesses, these were so unlucky, that they agreed not among themselves, but contradicted, and

380 *Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

Sermon

XII.



confounded one another. And at last, when two false Witnesses attested, that they heard him say, that he would destroy the Temple of God, and in three Days raise it up; yet this came not up to their Point; but they rather condemned him, upon his own Declaration, when, in the Name of God adjured to speak the Truth, He asserted that *he was the Son of God*, and that *hereafter they should see him come in the Clouds of Heaven*: This rendered unnecessary all Evidence with them; this was the Crime, and upon this they unanimously pronounce him worthy of Death.

What Rage and Malice doth this Proceeding imply! To what Degree of Wickedness must Men be fallen, thus to forget all the Rules of Justice and Truth; to conjure a Man in the Name of God to speak Truth, and for that Declaration to condemn him! Not considering the irresistible Proofs he had given of the Truth of that Declaration, but calling it Blasphemy, whether true or false; by which Rule, they must have condemned the Son of God whensoever he came, because the real Son of God, must certainly assert this of himself, and especially when thus adjured. But the same Generation of Men who call'd this Blasphemy, in Opposition to so great Proof and Evidence, could bear the same Assertion very well from

Impos

Impostors, as our Saviour foretold, without any Proof or Evidence at all; as the *Jews* after that found, to their Cost, in the Loss of so many Thousands, in the Persecutions that their Credulity, in adhering to the false Christs, brought upon them. And really their Carriage in this Particular, their being so obstinate against the utmost Proof, and their easy Belief without any; that in regard to the real Saviour of the World no Proof should satisfy them, and that they should be satisfied without any at all in regard to *Impostors*; I say, this looks so very extravagant and inconsistent, that it would appear almost incredible, did not the Scripture so often impute this to an extraordinary Cause, to a fatal and judicial Blindness in them.

Thus, you see, what hard, base, miserable Shifts the *Jews* were at to condemn our Saviour amongst themselves; and if he could not appear guilty here, where they were both Judges and Accusers, where Rage and Malice directed the whole Proceeding; at the Bar of *Pilate*, where he next appear-eth, his Innocency is likely to be more conspicuous. And indeed so it was, not the least Colour of a Crime appear'd here, yea, not any seem'd alledg'd, nothing was heard here but Noise and Tumult, *Away with him. Away with him. Crucify him. Crucify him.* And

Sermon

XII.

And in the Midst of this general Cry, how often doth his Judge ask, and intercede; *Why? What Evil hath he done?* How often doth he declare him innocent? And how difficultly is he induced to give Sentence against him? He ascends the Tribunal once, and again, in hopes that either their Rage will cool, or somewhat be soberly alledged, that might at least give some Colour to his Condemnation. When this, and all other Expedients avail'd nothing, but rather encreased the Tumult; when their Envy and Malice were advanced to that Degree, that they asked, and preferred a Murderer before him, in these Circumstances, when Pilate could no longer resist the Importunities, Clamours, and Menaces of these Men, and they extort a Sentence from him, partly out of Fear, and partly out of Complaisance, it is done in a Way that most of all cleared his Innocency. For although they could prevail with this Judge to condemn him, yet not to declare him guilty; but he took Water, and washed his Hands before the Multitude, and said, *I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person, see ye to it!* Thus, we see, the Fact of our Lord's Condemnation appear'd so impious and monstrous, in the Sight even of a Heathen and corrupt Judge, that he dreaded the Consequence, and was very desirous of shifting the Guilt of it en-
 bna
 tirely

tirely from himself, which the *Jews* as gladly receiv'd upon themselves, in that dreadful Imprecation, *His Blood be upon us and our Children.* A light Thing, doubtless, in their Esteem then, but by what they have found since, heavy and dismal enough. Pass we on,

4. To another Scene of our *Lord's Sufferings*, the Treatment he received after his Condemnation. There is generally a Pity that attends Men condemned, even for great Crimes, which preserves them from notorious Insults, and very opprobrious Language. But Pity, Tenderness, and all human Passions were utterly banished from the Breasts of these Men, which glow'd with nothing but diabolical Rage and Wickedness. For surely nothing less could produce an Usage, which is scarcely bestowed upon the worst Malefactors: For, with what Scorn, with what Contempt is his Condemnation attended! All his great Excellencies, his infinite Perfections, all such Things as should have struck them with the profoundest Awe and Reverence, are become Objects of their Ridicule. *He is arrayed in a purple Robe, and a Crown of Thorns is placed on his Head, and a Reed in his Hand, and they bow the Knee to him, with, Hail! King of the Jews!* To deride and mock his Pretensions of being

384 *Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

Sermon ing a King. He is *blinded*, and *smitten with*
XII. *the Palms of their Hands*, and *asked*, with the
 utmost Contempt, *Who it was that smote*
him? in order to turn into a mighty Jest
 his unerring Knowledge. He is *spit upon*,
 he is *buffeted*, he is *whipt*, and *scourged*: O
 God, What a prophane Triumph is here!
 What Indignities are these? Rarely offer'd
 to the Worst of Men: But when we consider,
 they were offer'd to the Son of God, the Ma-
 ker and Saviour of the World; to one, who
 was possessed of Power enough to have in-
 stantly consumed them, and had demonstra-
 ted this Power in innumerable Instances; that
 this Power should not be let loose here, upon
 such Objects, and upon such Provocations,
 upon such Contempt and Ridicule of it, I
 think, ought to be Matter of our Admira-
 tion and Astonishment.

Thus, having tired themselves in impious
 Sports and Cruelty, in Mockery and Deri-
 sion, they lead him to his Execution, and
 this is the last Thing I shall at present men-
 tion. And so it is order'd still, that in no-
 thing is the Son of God spared; but as in
 his Life, in his Condemnation, he has the
 hardest Measure, so being to die, he has
 the worst, the hardest, the most painful
 and ignominious Death, even *the Death*
of the Cross: So that if Sufferings will make
 a Man

Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.

385

a Man perfect, these were not wanting to illustrate his Perfections.

Sermon
XII.

He suffered the most ignominious Death. For such was the Death of the Cross, the Death usually of the meanest Men, and for the greatest Crimes, the Death of Slaves. To this Death our blessed Lord submitted; not only humbled himself unto Death, but, saith the Apostle, the *Death of the Cross*, the worst, most reproachful, and most painful Death. And sure, an amazing Condescension was it. To die, or suffer at all, appeareth to us strange; but to suffer the most shameful and dishonourable Death, to be lifted up as such an Object of Scorn, this is wonderful hard indeed!

And lo, in what Company he *suffereth* and *dieth*! Is it with the Great, and the Mighty? This is some Solace to the Sons of Men in suffering. Yea, Is it with the Innocent and Righteous, although poor and contemptible? Neither thus was *our Saviour's Death* graced. He suffereth between two *Thieves*, these were the *Son of God's* Companions in Suffering. He hung, and expired between them, and was *numbered* with them. In this last Scene, how is Majesty depress'd, and in what an abject Condition shewn! As a Worm, indeed, as King David speaketh, (I believe in his Person) and no Man; as so poor, and mean a Thing,

VOL. I.

C c

that

Sermon that every little Mortal could insult, tram-
 XII. ple upon, and deride him. For having
 nailed him to the Cross, between two enormous Offenders, having obtained their End, how do they taunt and triumph upon his Death and Sufferings! Say some, Ah! *thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three Days, if thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!* Say others, *He saved others, himself he cannot save:* Others *shook their Heads at him, as they pass'd, in Token of their Indignation and Scorn of him, and all his Pretensions;* nay, one even of the Thieves that hung with him on the Cross, notwithstanding his own Demerits, and the Greatness of his Pains and Sufferings, could find Leisure to join with the Cry, and cast the same in his Teeth. And sure, lower than this, he could never be degraded, more he could never endure, nor more empty himself.

Neither was this *Death* less painful, than ignominious. What could be more dolorous than to have his Body and Limbs stretched, extended, and nailed to the Cross, there in perfect Health to languish, and expire gradually? How many Throws and Convulsions must Nature suffer, before this Way it is overborn and dissolved? So that, in this Kind of Death, we meet with two Circumstances which render it the most terrible,

ble, greatest Length, and greatest Acuteness of Pain. Sermon
XII.

But this is a *Scene* too dismal to be long beheld: Altho' the hardned and insensible Jews were not ashamed to perpetrate so horrid a Crime, yet the *Sun* itself seemed ashamed to behold it: Although his Sufferings were the Sport and Ridicule of the Jews, yet all Nature shew'd another Sense, and sympathised with him. When the Authors of *our Saviour's* Death could not mourn, when human Kind were so hard and barbarous, the glorious Orb, the *Sun*, withheld his Beams, and cast the whole Land into Blackness and Darknes. So the Scripture testifieth, and *there was Darknes over all the Land from the sixth to the ninth Hour.* And actually upon his Expiration, it saith, *Behold, the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain, from the Top to the Bottom, and the Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent, and the Graves were open'd, and many Bodies of Saints which slept arose.* What Significations were these of the Impiety of the Fact, and of the Truth and Greatness of the *Person* who suffered? And if the Jews would have believ'd him, had he come down from the *Cross*, as they profess'd; certainly one would think, that all this should have confounded them, which vastly exceeded their own Demand; carried vastly greater Force, Demonstration,

Sermon

XII.

and Astonishment with it. I should pass on to other Particulars which I proposed, but the Time is already spent. I hope, what hath been said, will help to prepare us for the Duty that now approacheth, which is the only Use, I can at present make of this Discourse.

The *Sacrament*, as I said, is a lively Representation of those very Sufferings; is an Ordinance of our *Saviour*, which he instituted immediately before he underwent them, and commandeth his *Disciples* to use in Commemoration of them. His Love in them, the Blessings we receive by them, and the Duty, Obedience, and Love we owe him in Return for them, are all expressed and discharged in the Use of this Ordinance. And in the Virtue of this, two Things offer themselves to our most serious Consideration.

I. The odious Sin and Ingratitude of not Receiving, and that often, the *Holy Sacrament*. For what is the *Sacrament*? Our Lord hath told us in the Institution of it, it is in *Remembrance of him*, and his Sufferings; of that Death which is the Life of the World, and of every one of us in particular. And what ungrateful Men are they, that will not remember those Sufferings? What strange, and unaccountable Disciples? Can they

they hope for the Benefits, the Pardon of Sermon
their Sins, and everlasting Life, who will XII.
not remember the Cause and Ground of 
them? Can we too often remember the Suf-
ferings of *Jesus Christ*, if we depend upon
them for our Salvation? To see therefore
Christians neglect the *Sacrament*, is the most
unaccountable Thing; is a sad Argument of
the little Sense they have of those *Sufferings*
themselves, and *the Benefits they receive there-*
by; shews a Deadness and Laziness, a Luke-
warmness, that, I am afraid, is inconsistent
with that Faith, that should act Men as
Christians, as *Disciples of our Saviour*, and
Lovers of their own Souls.

Let me therefore advise, and exhort you
to lose no Opportunity to receive this *Holy*
Sacrament, because, certainly, you ought to
neglect no Means of exciting in you a Sense
of the Sufferings of the *Saviour of the World*:
If you would remember and love him, if
you would be thankful to him for them, if
you would improve in Grace, and the Pra-
ctice of Religion; in a Word, if you love
your own Souls, and intend their Happi-
ness in the World to come; if you aim at
these Things, you can never forget this Or-
dinance, because it is a *Remembrance* of the
Person, of the *Sufferings*, of the Cause upon
which all these Things are founded; by which
Cc 3 they

Sermon they are granted and obtained, and promised to every one of you. And

XII.

2. This Discourse of the Sufferings of *Jesus Christ*, naturally suggesteth the Care we should take to receive the Sacrament worthily; and for the Reason before assigned, because the Sacrament was instituted to commemorate these Sufferings, the Love, the Goodness, the Mercy they imply, the Benefits and Blessings they convey: And therefore the best Qualification to receive the Holy Sacrament, must needs be a deep, a lively, a grateful Sense of these Sufferings, an Abhorrence of Sin, which caused them, and induced the *Almighty Father* to give up his Son to these Indignities and Cruelties. For all this was done to make him a perfect Saviour, to render us clear, in the Sight of infinite Justice and Holiness, of the Guilt and Punishment that was due to our Offences. For, in this Scene, the Iniquity of us all was laid upon him, and he trode the Winepress of his Father's Wrath alone, and by his Stripes we are healed. He sweated great Drops of Blood for us, He was spit upon, was scourged, was spitefully intreated, in a Word, was crucified for us, for our Sins, our Sakes, and our Salvation. For we cannot think, that all this was done at random; that, without some especial Design, and invincible Necessity,

cessity, the *Son of God* was given up by his *Father* to suffer all these Indignities, and Miseries! No! Where was then a Providence? Where was the Love of the *Father* to him? But he undertook all for the Redemption of the World, to reconcile us to his *Father*, and as such, he spared himself in nothing. And who must not have a Sense of this Love and Goodness? Who must not have an Abhorrency of his Sins, which cost the *Son of God* so dear? For *we are not redeemed with corruptible Things, such as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ.*

As therefore there is a great Sin, in not frequenting this Ordinance; so is there likewise in approaching it without any due Regard, and Qualifications; without a Sense of our Sins, a lively Apprehension of these Sufferings, a Love to our Saviour for them, and Resolutions to walk conformably to the Obligations they lay us under. To rush unto the *Lord's Table* upon the Motive of a small Charity, of holding a Post of Honour, or Profit, out of Custom, or the like, we must still say, are dreadful Profanations of this holy Institution: And altho' our Church invites all Men to it, yet, we hope they will understand it, upon Preparation, upon Repentance, upon hearty Desires, and Resolutions of leaving their

Sermon Sins, and living agreeably to the divine
XII. Will and Laws. This will make it a Blessing to them, a Means of Pardon, and Forgiveness, of spiritual Life and Strength; What shall I say of the Contrary? Men ought to apprehend there is Danger in such Contempt, and they ought truly to fear, what other conscientious Persons seem groundlessly to apprehend, a Curse and Judgment. I hope this will offend none, but encourage all to be righteous and holy, that we may so celebrate *our Lord's Death* here, that we may enjoy the Benefits of it for ever.



SERMON



SERMON XII.

On the PASSION of our
BLESSED LORD.



HEB. II. 10.

To make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.

THE Method that I have for- Sermon
merly propos'd to handle these XIII.
Words in, hath been this. 

First, To shew you the Greatness of our Saviour's Sufferings.

Secondly, To shew you, That these Sufferings shewed the Son of God of the most perfect consummate Vertue.

Third-

Thirdly, To take particular Observation of his Vertues under these Sufferings.

Asto the First, The Greatness of our blessed Lord's Sufferings here on Earth; To give you the clearer Notion, and affect you with the deeper Sense of them, I have ranged them under these two Heads.

First, Here are some, which the History of his Life and Death contains very clearly and openly: And *Secondly*, Others that appear of a Kind somewhat different, which seem to have a different and more hidden Cause, and rather seem more to affect his Soul than his Body.

On the First of these I employ'd your Meditations in my last Discourse, enlarged on the Meanness and Poverty of his *outward Condition*, of his *Birth*, and *Life*, which submitted him to the Hardships and Labours of the most common Men. I set before you the *Baseness* and Treachery of *Judas* one of his own Apostles, who betrayed him to his Enemies, and his tragical End and Death; the Manner of his Apprehension, which was done with all the Indignity that Malice and Spite could suggest, with an armed Force, and in the Night, as if he had been the greatest Criminal, the greatest Thief or Robber. I have spoken of the *Injustice* and *Barbarity* of his Tryal and Con-
demnation,

demnation, and after this, the base and dishonourable *Usage* he received, the *Scorn* and *Contempt*, and the profane *Mockery* and *Derision* that were pass'd upon him. And as the Scripture suggests, that there were many *Types* of him, *David* and *Solomon* and *Sampson*; so all the Indignities that any of them complain of and endured, were literally accomplished, met all together in their full Force, and centered in him. This ushered in the Scene of his Death, the ignominious and painful Death of the Cross. Having thus just remembred you of the Heads of a former Discourse on these Words, I proceed now to what remains, and that is,

Secondly, Another Sort of Evils, which the Son of God endured, that seemed to have a different and more hidden Cause, and more to have affected his Soul than Body. I mean particularly, the Seisure he was under in the Garden at the Approach of his Apprehension and Crucifixion, which we peculiarly term his *Agony*. At this Time and Place is our Saviour shewn by the *Evangelists* under Oppressions and Struggles of Mind, far greater than any that ever appeared in his whole Life; and it hath afforded Matter of Objection to *Heathens*, and Wonder to *Christians*. And therefore it is, that notwithstanding this Scene preceded his Crucifixion,

and

Sermon

XIII.

Sermon and should have been spoken to before, I
 XIII. give it here a particular and distinct Consideration. Whatever were the Causes of this Sorrow, surely the Sorrow it self, the Burthen he lay under, was excessively great and heavy, as divers Ways it appeareth. Our Lord's own Expressions shew it, which are very emphatical. *My Soul*, saith he, *is exceeding sorrowful even unto Death*. This must imply a mighty Oppression, a Sorrow that encompassed and overwhelmed him. So the *Evangelists*, he *began to be grieved*, saith *St. Matthew*; to be *filled with Fear and Anguish*, saith *St. Mark*; and again *ἀδυνασῶν* to be faint and restless in the Spirit, say both. The exceeding Greatness of this Depression is farther manifested, from the Importunity and Vehemency of his Prayers to be delivered from it. *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me!* This he thrice repeated upon his Knees, yea, falling flat upon his Face, which must denote the Earnestness and Vehemency of his Desire, and consequently the Load and Pressure that inspired it. *St. Luke* thus expresses it, *He being in an Agony, prayed more earnestly*: And the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, his Prayer was accompanied with strong Crying and Tears: From all which, we must conclude, that there was something very particular in this. It was
 a Cup

a Cup very bitter indeed, that one of our Saviour's Character, a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquainted with Grief, so vehemently desired a Deliverance from. But farther, upon the Apprehension of it in the Garden, under what strange *Agony* is he shewn? It forced open the Pores of his Body, and made even great Drops of Blood to issue from them. Now (as it is well remarked by a modern Commentator on the Place) *If a sudden watry Sweat shews an Extremity of Fear and Consternation of Mind; who can sufficiently conceive the Greatness of that Horror, which produced these Clods of Blood?* The Scripture farther acquaints us, that, in the Midst of this Extremity, there appeared an *Angel of God* from Heaven strengthening him. And still this denotes, there was somewhat of extraordinary Difficulty in this Suffering, that it had some hidden and extraordinary Ingredient in it, which required the Presence of an Angel, and which his Father sent, on purpose to support and strengthen him under it. Lastly, *Our Lord's Cry* on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* This is Language that importeth no common Apprehension and Affliction.

All these Circumstances laid together and considered, must needs induce us to believe, that, among all our Saviour's Sufferings,

Sermon
XIII.

ings, this was the hardest and most terrible, because no others produced the like Effects upon his Body or Mind: But a Curiosity may still possess us, as to the Cause of this extraordinary Oppression and Sorrow.

We would not be positive on such a Point as this, wherein we may be liable to great Error; and we may assign what Causes we please, provided we assign not such, as are unworthy of our *blessed Saviour*, and of his *heavenly Father*.

And of this we should be guilty, in my Opinion, should we believe, that the bare Prospect and Apprehension of Death, raised all this Agony and Terror in the human Soul of the *Son of God*: This would be surely to lessen and depress his Vertue, and give the World an unworthy, unjust Idea of him. For how many wise and good *Men, Philosophers* as well as *Christians*, have been able to entertain the Prospect of Death without such Confusion and Consternation? Many at least of our Saviour's own Disciples have entertained the Prospect of, and really have endured, the most cruel, most painful, most frightful Deaths with marvellous Composure and Tranquillity of Mind: And it were strange, that our Saviour himself should not. He, who knew another World, and the Rewards of it with
that

that Certainty; he, who was so extraordinary-
 narily assisted, so perfectly free of all Sin
 which is the *Sting of Death*, and of so consummate a Vertue; I say, it were highly incongruous to our Lord's Character, to suppose the meer Apprehensions of Death capable of producing such an Agony of Soul, as the Scripture confesses of him. It was therefore, for certain, more than this; and there are more worthy Causes assignable of it:

As *First*, Peradventure more strong and violent Temptations of Satan; who, at the Time of our Lord's Crucifixion, seemed to be permitted a fuller Scope and under less Restraint. And what Scenes and Impressions, what Assaults he might be permitted to raise upon our Saviour's human Soul, we are not indeed qualified to pronounce dogmatically: But that there was something of this in it, is extremely probable. Many of the *Ancients*, as well as *Moderns*, have been of this Opinion; and not without good Countenance and Authority from Scripture. For that our Saviour's human Soul was not so guarded by the *Divinity*, as to hinder all Approach, all Access of the *Devil* to it, the *New Testament* expressly declareth, in an exact and particular Account, it hath given us of a famous *Temptation* that he endured from him in the *Wilderness*. And if at any
 Time

Sermon

XIII.

Sermon

XIII.

Time he was permitted to assault our Lord, as it is plain he was, (for in all Things was the Son of God tempted as we are, yet without Sin) without doubt the Time of his Death afforded the fairest Opportunity, the fairest Hopes of Success, in which he was not wanting with all his Arts and Efforts: And very little less than this, doth the Scripture it self affirm. For St. Luke, in the End of his Description of our Saviour's Temptation in the Wilderness, addeth these Words, Luke iv. 13. *Then he departed from him for a Season.* This Season, doubtless, was his Crucifixion, for which he reserved himself and all his fiery Darts; the Article and Hour of Death being the Time in which he is most busy with the Sons of Men, and capable of giving them the greatest Disturbances. Agreeably to this our Lord himself warns St. Peter that, besides the Affrightments and Terrors which his Apprehension and Crucifixion would naturally produce in him, there was more than all this to be feared from another Quarter. Satan himself would not be idle in this Hour, but had desired to sift him like Wheat; and, in the Instant of his Agony, he gives them all this Precept, *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.* And again, he saith expressly, on the Entrance of this black Scene, *The Prince of this World cometh;* and further yet, *This is your Hour,*

Hour, and the Power of Darknes. All which Expressions imply a very great Liberty afforded to the Devil and wicked Men, who acted under him and by him, to assault the Son of God, and execute their Malice and Rage upon him. All which indeed produced in him no Sin, but yet it might produce in him Disturbance, in which the Nature of a Temptation much consisteth.

Secondly, There is another Thing, to which the Scripture giveth Countenance, and which may be allign'd with fair Probability, as concurring towards this Sorrow and Agony that possessed the Son of God, and that is, not simply Death it self but, his Death circumstanced as it was; *Death for a sinful and guilty World.* For this is the constant Language of Scripture, that he suffered in our stead, and for our sakes; that the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all, and that by his Stripes we are healed. Now if he was really made an expiatory Sacrifice, and fell and died as such, this is an otherguess Thing than bare natural Death, and might very worthily raise in the Son of God severer Apprehensions of it. Not that our Saviour could entertain any Doubts of his being in his Father's Love at this Time, when he was doing (as one says very well) the profoundest Act of Obedience to him; when he was entring

Sermon

XIII.

on the Work for which he was born, and came into the World: Though here he had the highest Security of the *Divine Favour* towards himself; yet, if he stood in the Place of those who were obnoxious to the *Divine Wrath*, who were Enemies to *God*, although he suffered not for his own Sins, yet if for the Sins of others, this is a different Case, and might prove a Load and Burthen beyond what we can easily apprehend. For we are to remember, that *our Saviour* had the most exquisite lively Sense of Sin, and the Demerits of it, as well as of his *Father's* Justice and Holiness, which exacted the Punishment due to it; and the View of these Things, who can tell what Apprehensions it might fill his human Soul with? My chief Care, upon such Points as these are, is to suggest no Thoughts dishonourable to our blessed Redeemer; and if we consult our own imperfect Notions of Things, we shall find this Consideration affordeth a prodigious Accumulation; openeth to us a Cause of *our Saviour's* Sorrow, infinitely beyond natural Death. For certainly, it is no light Thing to bear the Sins of many, yea of the whole World; so to suffer as, in the Sight of a holy and just *God*, to clear and expiate it of Guilt and Punishment, and restore it to the *Divine Favour* and Love: All this turned upon the *Sufferings* of our *Lord*, all is imputed

puted to them; and might not the View of *Sermon*
 this overcast, oppress the purest, most inner- *XIII*
 cent Soul? *Our Saviour* sweated great Drops
 of Blood; and was there not a Cause? Con-
 sider, what he suffered for, in whose Room,
 and in whose Stead; and ye will wonder at
 the Greatness of his Love, but not at the
 Greatness of his Grief and Sorrow.

In this a marvellous Difference appeareth
 between the *Sufferings* and *Death* of the most
 holy Men, and of the *Son of God*. Not-
 withstanding many holy *Saints* and *Martyrs*
 have undergone Death in its most frightful
 Shapes, yet in this have they had nothing
 to combat with, but with its natural Hor-
 rors; and against these too have they had
 marvellous *Assistances* and *Consolations*. We
 never read of them, that they were made a
Curse for us, or that they sustained the
 Weight of other Mens Sins upon them in it.
 In this *our Saviour* trod the *Wine-press* of
 his *Father's Wrath* alone; and consequently,
 no Wonder that his *Sufferings* were peculiar,
 had in them a Cause and Ingredient, which
 never any Man's had. How heavy the Sins
 of the whole World might sit on the *Son of*
God when on the Cross, whether they might
 not strike deeper, wound and pain his Soul
 more than the bitter Taunts of the *Jews*,
 yea than the *Nails* in his *Hands* and *Feet*,
 and the *Spear* in his precious *Side*, I leave you

Sermon
XIII.

to consider, not only from what hath been before said, but from his last expiring Cry on the Cross, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* But howsoever this be, we are certain he had as great a Share of *Suffering*, as the Justice, the Holiness, and Wisdom of God saw necessary to the great Undertaking of his Redemption of the World. Nothing of this Kind, (although God's only beloved Son) was wanting to make him a complete, a perfect Saviour, and Redeemer. For, saith the Apostle here, *He was made perfect through Sufferings.* Which brings me to

The Second Thing, That *these great Sufferings shewed the Son of God to be of the most perfect and consummate Vertue.* He was made perfect or shewn to be most perfect by them. This was a Means which demonstrated, displayed our Lord's Vertue to the World, without which, how great soever otherwise, it had not had that great *Eclat*, (to speak in modern Language) or appeared in that Brightness and Glory. For a Man or Angel may have very great Vertue, but that can never appear so triumphantly as upon Trial and Exercise. Where would there be a Demonstration of Contentment, of Humility, of Meekness, of Patience, of Charity, of Forgiveness, without Poverty, Hardship, Provocation, Insults, Injuries, and the like Evils? These exer-

exercise, and consequently, display the Sermon
Vertues of Men; and not only so, but **XIII.**
mightily improve them.

There are *Vertues*, doubtless, that may be exercised in all Conditions, in Happiness as well as Affliction and Misery; but the Vertues of a happy State are much more easily practised, than those of an adverse, because they meet with fewer Difficulties, less Opposition than the contrary. To direct the Vessel aright, and carry on the due Course, under Storms and Tempests, is an otherguess Trial of a Man's Art and Skill, and a far greater Demonstration of it, than in calm and fair Weather: And so, in like manner, to trust, to depend on God, to submit to his Will under the seeming Frowns of *Heaven*, under seeming Derelictions, what a Vertue is this? What a Faith and Love it sheweth? The same Graces exercised under a prosperous Condition, under both outward and inward Consolations and Encouragements, have not near so divine an Appearance. Who doubteth whether *Job* was not by far a greater Man in his Adversity than Prosperity? Whether his Vertue did not appear more excellent in the one State than the Other? The *Devil* suggested subtilly enough by Way of Detraction from his Merit, in his first Estate, and from the Character God gave him; that under such Encouragements, un-

Sermon der such Ease and Plenty, as Job had, his
 XIII. Virtue was not to be so admired, and celebrated; but the proper Trial of this was Adversity, and God's shewing him under this, and his enduring it so well, left no Room to the Devil: himself of further Objection and Slander. And this hath render'd him such an Example of Patience to all After-Ages. And what great and eminent Example of Virtue hath there ever been without being exercised with Evils? Whom hath the World ever admir'd and extol'd for Virtue, but such as have retained and exerted it in Opposition to Adversities and Evils? Of this Number were Socrates, Cato, Regulus, and many others amongst the Heathens, the Greatness of whose Minds and Vertues had never been known to the World, and consequently had never been so useful, had it not been for Adversity. This display'd them, shewed, and made them great Men; and this, could the Heathens say, was a Mark of the divine Favour. But these were imperfect Vertues; yet, such as they were, Evils and Sufferings were a Means of producing them.

All the great and eminent Instances of Virtue and Piety recorded in Scripture have arose out of Evils, or the Furnace of Afflictions, and have shone most brightly in them. Witness the Prophets, the Apostles,
 the

the *Primitive Martyrs*, how strong, how great, how glorious is their *Vertue* in *Flames*? and what a *Figure* they make to the *World* in them? What a *Light* they cast? *We are made*, saith the *Apostle*, a *Spectacle* unto *Angels and Men*. And therefore, if a *Heathen* could say of *Cato*, that he was a *Spectacle* worthy of the *Gods*, when he stood bold and erect in the *Midst* of publick *Ruins*, when combating with outward *Evils*, and when undaunted in them; with how much greater Reason could a *Father of the Christian Church* say this of the *Primitive Martyrs*, who endured worse *Evils* than *Cato*, and for an infinitely better Cause?

The Condition of human *Vertue* being this, the greatest Part of human *Life* consisting of *Evils*, and the greatest *Vertue* being in resisting and overcoming them, and maintaining our *Duty*, our *Love* to *God* and *Men* under them, this being the hardest Thing to *Flesh* and *Blood*, it hence became necessary to the Character of the *Son of God*, who was the *Saviour of the World*, and the brightest and most perfect Pattern of all *Vertue*, that he should be shewn in *Adversity*, that his *Vertue* should be tried by the utmost *Evils* and *Sufferings*, and so be acknowledged and revered, and be of universal *Direction* and *Influence* to mortal *Men*. And really, the *Carriage*, the *Con-*

Sermon duct of the Son of God under Sufferings, affordeth not only the best Instructions, but the most delightful Entertainment to all true Christians: To see how he behaves under Poverty, under Calumny and Reproach, under Temptations, under Death; when one reflects on this, and compares with it the Deportment of *Heathens* in less Articles of Danger and Distress, the Surliness and haughty Pride of the One, and the Meekness, Humility, Patience, and Resignation of the Other; the Vertues of the greatest *Heathens* almost vanish, and those of the *Christian Heroe or Captain* stand alone.

This is the *Third Thing*, To take particular Observation of our blessed Saviour's Vertue under his Sufferings: But this would be too long for the present. I therefore chuse to conclude with some Inferences, which this Discourse naturally suggesteth.

I. I ask, Whether this should not, in all Reason, and upon cool and sober Consideration, abate the terrible and frightful Apprehensions, we are apt to entertain, of Evils and Sufferings? Whether it should not reconcile us to them, and teach us to bear them manfully, or rather christianly; and thank God for them? The Good and Advantage

vantage of them is great and manifold; they shew, and perfect our Vertues, if we have any, and, in their own Nature, tend to beget them in us, if we have none. The great Captain of our Salvation leads the Way in this, fights through them, and overcomes them, and is made perfect by them, and would we not be like him? Grudge we, when God calls us to it, to follow, to resemble him in any Degree and Measure, in this, here on Earth? Cannot we brook this Hardship? Then we must not hope, and aspire to be like him in Glory at his second Coming: For the Apostle's Saying is, *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.* When was the Church of God so pure and glorious, as under Persecution? Who is ever so good, as when he is in an ill State of Health? If we have any Seeds of Vertue and Piety, then they shew themselves. A manifest Indication of the Tendency, and, so, of the Mercy and Kindness of Afflictions, and with what Sense we should receive them. Ye therefore whom Providence doth thus visit, whether in Mind, Body, or Estate, think not the Worse of your Condition for them, but the Better. Suffer this Word of Exhortation: God is dealing with you herein as with Sons and Children, he is chastising and amending you; and if this should not reconcile

410 *Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

Sermon concile you to them, think, as *Christians*,
 XIII. how *God* dealt with his own *beloved Son*,
 in this World; how many and great Evils
 he laid upon him; and made him *perfect*
by them; And consider further, for his ex-
 cellent Deportment and Carriage under
 them, how *highly God* hath *exalted him*, far
 above all *Angels*, above all *Principalities* and
Powers, above every Thing that is named
 in Heaven or Earth. In a Word, this hath
 advanced the human Nature above the An-
 gelical. See therefore, the *Fruits* of suffer-
 ing Afflictions. This is the Design of your
heavenly Father in them. If ye are *Chri-*
stians, they beget, increase, display your
 Vertues, and consequently your Reward.

This should teach us, *Idly*, to have a
very lively Sense of the Justice and Holiness
of God: For, as in those Sufferings of the
Son of God, his *Love* and *Mercy* is display-
 ed, so no less his *Justice*; and it is hard to
 say, in this Oeconomy and Dispensation,
 which doth most triumph. If we view the
 divine Justice in the Glass of the Suffer-
 ings of *his Son*, we have, I do not say, a
 terrible, but a glorious Idea of it. We see
 herein Justice to a Perfection, an Attribute
 of *God*, as essential to his Nature, as *Mer-*
cy and *Love*, from which he can never de-
 part. For when the *Son of God* stood the
 Object

Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord. 411

Object of it, and was to answer it, what *Sermon?*
Punishments did he suffer? What *Stripes* XIII
endure? Should not this therefore teach us
to be aware, that we are not exposed by
our Sins in our own Persons to that Ju-
stice, which exacted such Punishments of
him who had committed none? Have we
that Innocency, that Love of the Father
to plead in our Behalf? What have we
therefore to screen us from his Justice,
if the Sacrifice of his Son's Death hath
not appeased and satisfied it? Will that
Justice and Holiness spare us, which spa-
red not his own Beloved Son? What a
gross Delusion is this? Labour therefore
to be of the Number of those whom the
Son will own, to whom he will apply the
Merits of his Death and Passion, or else,
surely, ye will endure the Strokes of the
Divine Justice: For somewhere the Ju-
stice of God will be exerted, and if we
have no just Claim to the Benefits of
Christ's Sufferings, if those be no Atonement
for you, it must light upon your
selves.

Thirdly, From hence it appeareth under
what high Obligations we lie to love,
obey, and honour the Son of God. Con-
sider, what he hath done for us, the Pover-
ty, the Debasingment, the Contempt, the Temp-
tation,

412 *Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

Sermon tation, the *Sufferings*, the *Death*, he hath
XIII. endured for our Sakes, and in our Stead.

~~~~~ Weigh seriously within your selves, the  
 Miseries these *Sufferings* delivered us from,  
 the Blessings and Advantages they procure  
 us, the glorious Prospects they yield us;  
 and doth not all this move us? Doth not  
 all this endear this Person to us, and ren-  
 der him the Object of our highest Love?  
 O hardened, insensible, ungrateful Men!  
 how just and righteous is the *Apostle's*  
*Sentence* against all such? *If any Man love*  
*not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathe-*  
*ma Maranatha!* Let him be *accursed*, ex-  
 communicated from all *Christian Society* and  
*Fellowship*.

If we have any Sparks of Ingenuity and  
 Gratitude, any Sense of our own Good,  
 how dear should this Person be to us?  
 How should our Breasts glow towards  
 him? And with what Flame should they  
 be filled? How devoted should we be to  
 his Service? And what can we think too  
 much in Requital of so much Love, as he  
 hath displayed towards us? Our All, our  
 Selves, are but poor Returns, and yet will  
 we love *Houses*, or *Lands*, &c. more than him?  
 How unworthy are we of him?

*Fourthly,*

Fourthly and Lastly, The Consideration of Sermon these *Sufferings of the Son of God*, shews the **XIII.** Obligations we are under to a constant and worthy Receiving the Holy Sacrament: Because this Ordinance was instituted by him in Remembrance, or Commemoration of his Sufferings, his Agonies, and his Death, and to excite in his Followers a constant, perpetual, and lively Sense of them: And, without Dispute, whosoever believes these Sufferings, has any tolerable Sense of them, of their Benefits and Effects to his own Soul, such a One must needs stand disposed to embrace every Opportunity, every Call, and Summons to this Duty. The Contrary were a most wretched unchristian Thing, hath no better Sense nor Meaning, than that Men are averse to the Remembrance of their Redeemer, of his Passion, and Death, which is their Ransom and Life: And what a Confession were this? What *Christians* are Men shewn under this View? Have we a warm lively Sense of the *Sufferings of our Saviour*? Discern we his Love in them? And do they not raise in us any Love towards him? I say, Is this possible? And will we not remember them? Who will believe this? Whatsoever Men think now, the ancient *Christian Church* had a different Opinion of these Things.

When

Sermon

XIII



When Men are invited to the Sacrament, what are they invited to, but to remember their Redeemer, his Love, his Passion and his Death? And, certainly, should we not be afraid, should we not be ashamed, to refuse it? If we will not remember him, can we hope that he will remember us, or apply the Benefits of that Death to us, of which we had so slight an Opinion, as not to remember it?

Let us cease Trifling in the Business of Religion. We are *Christians*, or not. If the Former, let us do as becomes *Christians*, as all true *Christians* have ever done. We hear what our Church saith, that our Souls are strengthened by this Sacrament, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine. And will a Repast, twice or thrice a Year, support our Body, and animal Life? Who thinks, and practises so foolishly, in regard to his temporal Health and Life? That requires daily, and constant Support, and why not the spiritual Life of our Souls? See how we deal by them. Once or twice a Year, feeding on the Banquet of this most heavenly Food, we think sufficient to maintain our spiritual Life. But if there be such Effects in such seldom Receiving, what would the Effects be of our constantly Doing it?

To



*Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.* 415

To conclude? If ye consider the *Suffer-Sermon*  
*ings* of which this *Ordinance* is a *Remem-* XIII.  
*brance*, ye will not fail to frequent it, and  
to frequent it with a due Sense of your Sins,  
which caused these Sufferings, with *Love* to  
*God*, and *Charity* and *Forgiveness* to *Man*,  
which this *Ordinance* displayeth, and in-  
culcateth: And this will render you wor-  
thy *Communicants*, entitle you to the Bene-  
fits of our *Saviour's Passion*, *Forgiveness* of  
Sins, *spiritual Strength* and *Life* here, and  
everlasting *Life* hereafter.

*Which God, &c.*



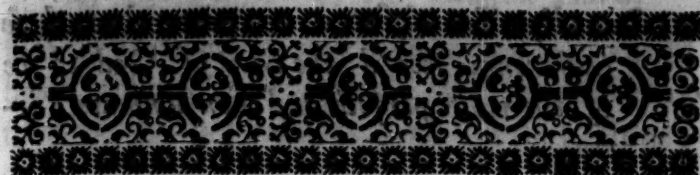
SERMON

The conclusion; If we consider the suffer-  
 ings of which this Ordinance is a Remem-  
 berance, we will not fail to frequent it, and  
 to frequent it with a due sense of your sins,  
 which caused these sufferings, with love to  
 God, and Charity and Forbearance to Man,  
 which this Ordinance displayeth, and in-  
 culcath: And this will render you wor-  
 thy Communicants, entitle you to the Bene-  
 fits of our Saviour's Passion, Forgiveness of  
 sins, spiritual strength and life here, and  
 everlasting life hereafter.

Which God, &c.

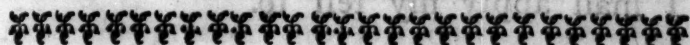


SERMON



# SERMON XIV.

On the Passion of our BLESSED  
LORD.



HEBREWS II. 10.

*To make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.*

**U**PON these Words I have Sermon  
proposed to do these three XIV.  
Things;

*First, to lay before you the Matter  
of Fact here asserted, the Greatness  
or Perfection of our blessed Saviour's  
Sufferings.*

VOL. I.

E e

Secondly,



Sermon  
XIV.

Secondly, To observe to you, that these Sufferings shew'd the Son of God to be of the most perfect and consummate Virtue.

Thirdly, To make some particular Observations, or Reflections, on his Carriage and Virtues under these Sufferings.

In the two former Discourses on this Subject I have spoken to the two first of these; the last now only remaineth, which I shall apply my self to.

Our Lord, you have already heard, when he came into the World, upon the important and gracious Work of the Redemption of Mankind, and took upon him our corruptible Nature, in order to sanctify, and raise it to the Divine, chose not to appear in an earthly Port or Majesty, which yet had been an infinite Debasement and Humiliation to him, (the most exalted Condition of this Life falling infinitely beneath the Blessedness, and Glory he descended from;) but on the contrary, submitted himself to the lowest, poorest, most miserable Estate that this Life affordeth; went through the greatest Hardships,

*Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

419

Sermon  
XIV.

ships, Contempts, and Sufferings that could befall any of the Sons of Men: And this teaches us many great and noble Lessons; amongst the rest, how to despise human Greatness, and how to behave our selves under Circumstances that any Way resemble his. Without all Doubt, as I have shewn, the Trial of a Man's Virtue is Temptation and Adversity; and the Virtues that are exercised thereby appear the brightest, and strike us with the greatest Admiration, because they imply Difficulties and Oppositions, or rather, a Conquest over them: And the greater the Difficulties are that Men encounter in the Way of their Duty, the more will their Virtues shine, which surmount them. Now the proper Virtues, which can be exercised under Adversity and Misery, are Contentment, Patience, Devotion, Charity, Resignation to the Will of God: And what great Degrees of these our Lord displayed under his Sufferings, may be very proper and instructive for us at this Time to consider. I begin with his Contentment.

This Virtue in a strict Sense, and as distinguished from others, is a Mortification of our worldly Passions, of our Love, and Desire of temporal Good, of the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this Life; so that the Soul finds no Uneasiness in the

Sermon  
XIV.

Want of these Things: And so it is generally taken in Scripture. I have learnt, saith St. Paul, in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content; and again, Godliness with Contentment is great Gain; for we brought Nothing into this World, and it is certain, we can carry nothing out: Having therefore Food and Raiment, let us be therewithal content. And again, John the Baptist to the Soldiers, Be content with your Wages: In which, and other Places, the Object, or rather Exercise of this Virtue, is, peculiarly a Want of Riches, or a low and needy State; accordingly the original Word is, in all those Scriptures, ἀνταρκτός, which importeth properly a Sufficiency in our selves, when we have little or no Dependence on outward Things; when our Quiet and our Peace resteth not on them, but upon a Foundation within us: As old Socrates once said, when he looked into a Shop set out with a mighty Variety of the most costly Utensils and Toys, *How many Things are here that I do not want?* The not Wanting of these Things, The Abridgment or Mortification of the Desires after them, is the Ground of inward Peace and Happiness. Contentment is what makes Poverty, and the usual Attendants of it, Contempt and Scorn, sit easy and light upon the Mind.

From



*Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

421

Sermon  
XIV.

From hence ye will observe, *Contentment* is no ordinary Attainment, no ordinary Grace or Virtue: As we may perceive, not only from the Cause which produces it, which is a *Mortification of worldly Desires*, but from the little of it that is found amongst Men: Witness their strong Attachments to Riches, to worldly Fame, and Pleasure, their eager Scrambles and Contentions about these Things, their Dejections and Exclamations at any Disappointments or Losses of them, and their Envy at those that possess them, or excel in these Advantages. And indeed, what is human Life but a grand Struggle for the World? That's the Prey and Quarry, upon which generally Men are so voraciously bent; which sheweth *Contentment* in Men's Condition, to be a rare Thing, and what Sense and Opinion they have of Poverty. Certainly, an old Poet well described this, when he introduced Poverty on the Stage, as a frightful Monster, which struck the Spectators with Dread and Horror. And when Men are not content and easy in a prosperous Condition, as few are, what Wonder that they are not so in an Adverse! But, behold the *Son of God* under this Condition! Who could be more poor than he was? If Poverty be an Evil, an Exercise upon the Soul, a Tryal of a

Sermon  
XIV.

Man's Virtue, what Degrees did our Saviour suffer of it? *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.* And yet did he show any Signs of inward Discontent? Any Dismay? Any Dejection of Spirit under this? Hear we any Complaints, any Envy at the Rich? Is his Poverty any Obstruction or Incumbrance upon him? What an even, calm, what a chearful, serene Spirit appears throughout his whole Life and Actions? We shall not find the like in the Lives of *Philosophers*, no, nor of holy Men and Saints. The Rants and Invectives of the former against Riches often betray their Love of them, and they seem as proud and conceited of their Poverty, as others are of their Wealth. *David* was a great and good Man; and yet he confesses the Prosperity of the Wicked was a Surprise upon him, and for the present, drew him into unbecoming Thoughts and Apprehensions of his Maker. It was doubtless prodigiously great in *Job*, and will be for ever celebrated; that he received so great a Stroke from the Hands of God with no other Reflection than, *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return again: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath*

bath taken away; Blessed be the Name of the Lord! But yet afterwards this great and excellent Man was not free from Discomposure, as I shall by and by take Leave to observe, in shewing him, and our Lord, in the Exercise of another Grace.

Sermon  
XIV.

The Life of *Jesus Christ* is wrought with great Simplicity, with a perfect Neglect of all Ornament and Address, without any Shew of Design of making our Saviour appear greater than he really was. And as to his Contentment, it implies the profoundest Ease and Satisfaction in his Condition; it is mild and gentle, quiet and serene, void of all Noise, Blustering and Ostentation: It seeks no Notice or Observation, courts no Body's Praises, but seems the Result of a perfect inward Calm.

It is needful farther to observe, in order to discern the Merit and Triumph of our Lord's Contentment, that *Poverty* is seldom the Object of Men's Choice, but is usually brought upon them by an overruling Providence: And this detracteth much from the Virtue, because there is usually in it a Mixture of Necessity. Who would prefer *Poverty* to Riches, yea to a Kingdom, when both lay within his Power, and the one could be avoided, and



Sermon the other obtained with Ease and Honour? And yet this was our *Saviour's* Case. There was no Force nor Compulsion upon him, but a Life of *Poverty* was freely chosen, and an Offer of a Kingdom rejected, upon such Motives and Ends as still enhanced his Virtue in the Refusal of it. Pass we on

To his *Patience*. This peculiarly regards Sufferings, Affronts, Provocations, Persecutions, and such like Evils. And with what Degrees of all these our *Saviour* was exercised, you have heard, and must in general remember, from the *Scriptures*, which have been this Week read to you concerning them. I am not on these now, but remarking to you the Excellency of his Deportment under them. Was there ever any Thing so unjust, so cruel, so barbarous, as the Usage of the *Jews*; as their Forcing, in a Manner, his Judge, contrary to his Reason and Conscience, to condemn and crucify him; as their importunate Out-cries to have him crucified; as their Crowning him with Thorns; as their bitter Taunts, their Derision, and Mockery; as their Buffeting, their Spitting on his Face? What inhuman Treatment would this appear towards the greatest Malefactor? But when discharged on perfect Innocency and Goodness, on the only beloved

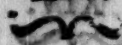
loved *Son of God*, what Indignities and Provocations are they? And what Degrees of Patience must it require to endure and surmount them, and especially when the Means of Redressing and Punishing these Insults perfectly lay in his own Power, and, at a Word's Speaking, he might have consumed them all?

As our *blessed Saviour's* Contumelies and Sufferings exceeded all other Men's, so they gave the greatest Scope to this Virtue of *Patience*, and shewed it in the most triumphant Degrees. That so many Evils should concur, and light upon a Man at once; the Forfaking of Friends, the Rage and Insults of Enemies, the Shame and Pains of a most cruel and ignominious Death; add to these those inward Troubles and Pressures that lay sore upon his Soul, and yet that all these should not exasperate or discompose his Spirit; should not draw from him one hasty, indiscreet, culpable Word or Action: Is not this marvellous? And yet, in this Scene of Sufferings, in this Hour of Darkness, when the Rage of the Tongues of Men, when the Pains of Death, when the Powers of Hell were let loose upon him, when these *fat Bulls of Basan* closed him in on every Side, when in the Midst of all these Evils, if you survey his Words, his Actions, his

Car-

Sermon

XIV.



Carriage narrowly, and most critically remark and censure them, can you see any Uneasiness and Impatiency appear; uttereth he any loud Complaints, maketh he any Returns to these horrid Usages?

With what *Mildness*; with what *Meekness*, with what *Gentleness*, doth he receive all this? How passive and silent is he under them? So that in this Respect he became his *Enemy's* and *Judge's* Wonder.

Sure an exact Sight had the old *Prophets* of our *Saviour's* Virtue and Behaviour in this Particular, or else they could not have so lively described him. *He shall not, says one, strive; nor cry, neither shall any Man hear his Voice in the Streets. A bruised Reed shall he not break, and smoking Flax shall he not quench; 'till he send forth Judgment unto Victory. And again, As a Sheep before his Shearers is dumb; so opened he not his Mouth. How punctually doth he answer this Character? And well may the Authors of the New Testament remark, and urge upon our Imitation this Carriage of the Son of God, who bore such Contradiction of Sinners, who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not; but committed himself to him, who judgeth righteously.*

The



The *Scriptures* indeed contain other great Sermon and noble Examples of Patience; but as **XIV.** great as they are, they appear far inferior to this, that our Saviour hath set us. The *New Testament* it self extolleth the Patience of *Job*; but when, to the Loss of his Goods and Children, were added sore Pains and Diseases in his Body, do there not appear some extraordinary Sal- lies of Passion? What can we think, when he saith, *Let the Day perish, wherein I was born, and the Night, in which it was said, There is a Man-child conceived! Let them curse the Day, &c.* as at large, in the third Chapter. That this is sinful I will not say; but certainly it is less virtuous. It is not like the Calmness and Composure of the Son of God under the greatest and most unjust Sufferings. We find no such Commotions of Mind, nor Expressions from him. What Man of greater Virtue and Patience than the Apostle St. Paul? But see him and our Lord before their Judges: The High Priest commanded the Apostle to be smote on the Face. St. Paul's Answer is, *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall; for sittest thou to judge me according to the Law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the Law?* You know what follows. Behold our Saviour before the same Authority, and upon a greater Provocation.

Sermon One of the Officers, who stood by, struck Je-  
 XIV. sus with the Palm of his Hand, saying, an-  
 swerest thou the High-Priest so? But our  
 Lord's Answer is, If I have spoken Evil,  
 bear Witness of the Evil, but if well, why  
 smitest thou me? Who seeth not the Dif-  
 ference here? which is more patient and  
 passive upon unjust and illegal Treatment?  
 But I must remember I have other Par-  
 ticulars.

Let us take a short View of his Re-  
 signation to the Mind and Will of God in  
 all these Sufferings. This is the Crown  
 of the former Virtues of Contentment, and  
 Patience, what gives them their Worth and  
 Lustre, and what makes them properly re-  
 ligious, and rewardable before God. For  
 Actions may be materially the same, but  
 differ exceedingly in the Form, or in the  
 Principles or Motives which inspire and  
 animate Men to the Practice of them.  
 The Difference of these Principles or Mo-  
 tives, as to Action, very much distingui-  
 shes between the *Heathen* and the *Christian*  
 Virtues. For who can doubt, who hath  
 read any Thing of former Times, but  
 many Men amongst the *Heathens*, *Philoso-  
 phers* and *Emperours*, have shewn most  
 strange Hardiness and Obstinacy, most  
 strange Contempt of Evils upon Occasion?  
 Witness *Roman Generals*, who have most  
 solemn.

solemnly devoted, most desperately plunged themselves into immediate Death, on an Apprehension of saving the State. Witness the *Youth of Sparta*, who would suffer their *Flesh and Limbs* to be torn from them without any *Complaint*, or *Groan*, or *Cry*: They stand as firm and unshaken, as *Martyrs* at the *Stake*, under outward *Evils*, and seem to shew the same external *Courage* and *Patience*: But then, look to the inward *Causes*, and *Motives*, and *Ends* of these *Sufferings*, what influenced the one and the other, and ye will espy a marvellous *Difference*. The *Ground* of this *Patience*, and *Endurance* of *Evil*, amongst the *Heathens*, was *Temporal Fame* and *Reputation*, was *Custom*, and the *Force* of *Education*, was a natural *Hardiness* and *Fierceness* of *Temper*, together, sometimes, with a most passionate *Love* of their *Country's Prosperity* and *Glory*; (this last seems their highest and most noble *Motive*,) these were the *Springs* of those *Facts*, and *Practices* of theirs, which look so glaring and astonishing. But now, the *Ground* of a *Christian's Virtue*, of his *Contentment* and *Patience*, is different from this. He has other *Motives*, other *Views*, other *Ends*. He is content under *Poverty*; Why? Because it is the *Will* of the *Sovereign Disposer*; It is the

Lot



Sermon Lot and Condition, which he hath appointed him, and the Part he is to act on the Stage of the World. He endureth Pain, Hardships, and Evils, Why? Because it is the Determination of his heavenly Father, and tendeth to illustrate and propagate his Truth, his Honour, and Glory throughout the World. So that in this the *Christian Man* submits all to the Will of God, makes his Will his own, sacrifices his own Pleasure and his own Ease, his own temporal Goods and Fame, yea, and if required, his own Health and Life to the Pleasure and the Honour of his God. And is not this a great Engagement upon so gracious so generous a Being as God is? Must not this endear the Persons and Actions of such Men to him? Surely, a Soul resign'd to the Will of God, content and patient under Torments and Flames for his Sake, as it is the noblest and highest Offering a Man can make his Creator, so it must be the most acceptable Service, the most glorious Sight to the great Being. I mean not, that the *Sufferings* of his Servants are so pleasing to him, but their *Love*, demonstrated by them, which casteth out Fear, and proves too hard for Death, and the greatest Evils.

*Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

431

In this our Saviour was the most perfect Sermon and glorious Example that ever the World XIV. had. How entirely was his Will subjected and resigned to the Will of God? He had indeed no Will of his own to do: The Will of God was his Meat and Drink, his highest Pleasure and Satisfaction, his great Business and Work. And when under so great an Accumulation, and Weight of Miseries, when under such Tortures of Body and Soul, when in his last Agony, when under such Pains and Anguish as, instead of Sweat, forced Drops of Blood through the Pores of his Body, (inexpressibly great must, sure, be the Confusion, the Consternation that produced this! (In the midst of all this, doth he forget this perfect Compliance and Submission to his Father's Will? *The Cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* Yea, most resigned is he now; for, mark how he addresses; *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; yet not mine; but thy Will be done;* and this as often as he prayeth. *Can there be more done than this? More Duty and Submission shewn than to submit all to his heavenly Father? Had he Pains, had he Sorrows, greater than any Man ever had? (So the Scripture testifies) then the greater was the Virtue of his*

Sermon his Resignation. And because it is impossible for us to know the Extent and the Greatness of his Sufferings, we can never know how great Degrees of Resignation he exercised in them. For, when we say, a Man is resign'd to the Will of God, to know the just Meaning of this, and the Virtue it implies, we must ask, and understand, in what he was resigned; and this is largely described in *Scripture*, in regard to the *Son of God*. But, the Sum is, he suffered in our Stead, he suffered for the Sins of the whole World; and what Suffering that might be, who can tell? Perhaps we may, and, I hope, we shall know more of this hereafter, to heighten our Love to Christ, and to endear his Person to us for ever: When we are ravished with those heavenly Joys, which he hath procured, then it will be Time enough to know, how much they cost the *Son of God*, the Author of them. But here, we know, he sweated great Drops of Blood; and could it be a small Matter, that raised this Consternation, this Sorrow, and Heaviness in the most innocent, holiest, wisest, patientest Man that ever lived; that produced so rare and extraordinary an Effect? And must not his perfect *Submission* to the *Will of God*, in so great an

*(then the greatest was the Virtue of his)* Evil,



Evil, shew us the Greatness of his Re-  
*signation?* *Sermon*  
 XIV.

Let us transiently observe his *Devotion* under these Miseries. It is impossible to have any due Notion and Sense of a *God* without constant Prayer unto him. For this is the most especial Acknowledgment of his Perfections, of the Favours we receive of him, and of the absolute Dependence we have on him. Therefore in all Circumstances of Life, in Adversity or Prosperity, in Health or Sickness, a Man's Religion, if he has any, appears in his Devotion, and bears Proportion with it. But now, *Adversity* and *Misery*, which strip us of worldly Accommodations, of worldly Props, and Supports, and Comforts, and leave us almost destitute of every Thing but the divine Help and Assistance, naturally shew the Force of our Religion, and, where Strength will permit, encrease, and inflame our Devotion. For, to whom should we apply in Distress and Misery, but to that *Being* only who can help us, who is of an uncontrollable Power, and can deliver us from all Evils, or support or ease us under them? This Instruction the Example of the *Son of God* gives us in the noblest Degree: For, what did the Fore-sight of all those Evils that were coming upon him, of the

434 *Of the Passion of our Blessed Lord.*

Sermon Shame, of the Pains of the Cross, in a  
 XIV Word, what did his *Agony* produce, but  
 the greater Importunity and Vehemency  
 of Devotion? His Distress was now greater,  
 and therefore his Devotion rises in Pro-  
 portion: So the History of this Fact re-  
 presents the Matter: *being in an Agony, he*  
*became the more earnest in Prayer.* He se-  
 parated himself once, and again, from his  
 Disciples to the Purpose of Prayer; and,  
 as to the Manner of it, how full of Ar-  
 dor? *He fell upon his Face.* What Vehe-  
 mency doth this imply? And his Expres-  
 sions, how agreeable to the Posture of his  
 Body? *O my Father!* And this is thrice  
 repeated: What Urgency? What Flame  
 is here? This is to pray in Faith, or with  
 a Belief that the Being can deliver us,  
 which we address to. So that, you see, the  
*Son of God* sinketh not under the Load,  
 which was laid upon him: The greater  
 the Evils, coming upon him, appear, the  
 more earnest is he to *his Father* to sup-  
 port him under them? the more he wants  
 his Assistance, the more earnestly he seeks  
 it. And what is this but the Perfection  
 and the Height of Devotion? On the  
 contrary, to see a Man endure Evils,  
 Sickness, or Death without Prayer, what  
 see we here but his Obstinacy, his Stu-  
 pidity rather than his Virtue? But to  
 see

See a Man, in Imitation of *Jesus Christ*, Sermon  
go through the greatest Evils, approach XIV.  
his own Death, full of Contentment, of  
Patience, of Resignation, of Devotion, to  
God; this shews what Principle animates  
him, in the Virtue of what Principle he  
acts, and suffers, and dies; upon which  
the Worth, the Praise, and Reward of all  
is grounded.

Doubtless it is most difficult to pra-  
tise Devotion under the seeming Frowns  
of *Heaven*, under seeming Derelictions,  
under less inward Encouragements and  
Consolations, and this, such as are exer-  
cised with it feel, and complain of: But,  
did not the *Son of God* surmount this?  
Did he not endure Temptations? Was he  
not subject to less divine Consolations?  
*My God! My God!* Why hast thou for-  
saken me? Can these Words imply less?  
And yet, doth all this extinguish his De-  
votion to *God*? Yea, doth it not increase  
it? This is Instruction to us all, to per-  
mit no outward, nor inward Troubles to  
mar, and jostle out our Devotion; but  
this would be especially regarded by such,  
as labour under melancholy Apprehen-  
sions.

His *Charity* is the last Thing. And  
surely that is superlative, and divine.  
For, that the Injustice, the Cruelty, the



Sermon Affronts, and Insults of his Enemies should

XIV.

not extinguish his Love towards them; that the Pains and *Agonies* of Death on the *Cross* should extort from him no other Expressions against the Authors of them than Forgiveness, and Prayers for them; that while they were taking away his Life, he should be concerned, not for their temporal but eternal Life; that he should not only forgive them himself, but intercede with his Father to forgive them too, become their Advocate on the *Cross*, and excuse them; who must not think all this a wonderful Degree of Charity? *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* What? Were they not now taking away his Life, most unjustly, and barbarously? They knew this. They did not indeed know him to be the only *Son of God*, the Prince of Life, and the Lord of Glory, but whose Fault was that? And yet over such a foul, such a base Fact as this, over his own Crucifixion, would the Mercy and the Goodness of our Lord throw a *Shadow*, a Veil. Can we wonder at the Expressions of the *Apostles* upon this Subject, who were penetrated with the Sense of it, that they pray their Converts may be able to comprehend, with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth; and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge?

that

that they so magnify, so urge us to the Sermon  
Imitation of it? For what a great Thing XIV.  
is this, not only to forgive, and pray,  
but to dye for his Enemies? *Greater Love  
bath no Man than this; and in this, saith  
St. Paul, is the Love of Christ demonstrated.*  
How well did our Saviour here practise his  
own Precepts? And what an Example did  
he set us?

I come to make a brief Reflection or  
two, by Way of Application:

And that shall be, *First*, to observe to  
you the *Truth and Consistency of Scripture*,  
in its representing our *blessed Saviour* free  
from all Sin. This is a Privilege that no  
Man ever had but himself; and, indeed,  
the Nature of Man is found so prone to  
Sin, that a total Exemption from it seems  
wonderful. But the *Scriptures*, which as-  
sert this of our Saviour, more easily gain  
our Belief in so difficult a Point, when we  
see how well it is supported, and attested  
by our *blessed Lord's* Actions and Practices:  
When our *Lord's* Life, scann'd never so  
curiously, affords not the least Flaw, the  
least Miscarriage, the least Imperfection.  
Imperfection did I say? When it hold-  
eth forth the greatest Height of all *Virtue*  
and *Religion*; when his Life falls not be-  
neath

Sermon neath any one of his own most elevated  
 XIV. Rules and Precepts, but they are all ex-  
 emplify'd, receive new Light and Force  
 from it. In vain had the Authors of the  
*New Testament* asserted our *Saviour* free  
 from all Sin, if they had shewn him in  
 Action like common Men; but now his  
 Actions appear as much above ours, as his  
 Character is.

Secondly, Let this teach us to imitate these  
*Virtues* of our *blessed Saviour*. Are we poor?  
 Are we visited with Losses, with Sickness?  
 Do other Men injure and persecute us?  
 Was not this the Lot and Portion of the  
*Son of God*? And are we better and more  
 deserving than he? Murmur we under  
 these Dispensations of divine Providence?  
 Charge we *God* foolishly? Envy we Men?  
 How contrary is this to the Deportment  
 of *Jesus Christ*? Call we him *Lord* and  
*Master*, and will we not imitate him? Is  
 he our *Captain*, and will we not be led by  
 him, nor follow his Example? But how  
 are we then his Disciples? And how can  
 we pretend to partake of those Rewards,  
 which his *Virtues*, under these Sufferings,  
 have raised his human Nature to?

Let other Men keep Books and Regi-  
 sters of what they may, sometimes un-  
 justly, esteem Wrongs and Injuries; let  
 them



them print them on Paper or Marble, or Sermon  
upon what they please, to refresh their XIV.  
Memories, and inspire them with Revenge  
upon Poor or Rich, as their Power and Op-  
portunity serveth; and this let them do  
under specious Pretences of Zeal, and  
publick Good: But, for us, let us have  
no such Principles, no such Notions, no  
such Practices: For *we have not so learned*  
*of Christ*. Neither his Precepts nor Exam-  
ple hold forth any such Thing. We must  
learn those Things out of our own  
wicked Hearts, or the corrupt Practices of  
others.

What Pity is it, that Men, who very  
much resemble *our Lord* in their outward  
Condition, should not resemble him too  
in the inward Frame and Temper of their  
Minds, in their *Contentment, Resignation,*  
*Patience, Devotion, and Charity*? How  
many Promises has this of a Reward?  
And what a glorious Opportunity do they  
lose of recommending themselves to *God*?  
And how happy would those Evils make  
them, if they behav'd after their great  
Example?

This is the *New Man*; This is to *put*  
*on Christ*; This is to *form Christ within us*;  
when his Nature is transcribed on ours;  
when we are like him in those Virtues  
that he exercised. With what better Quali-  
fications

Sermonifications can we approach the *Sacrament*,  
 XIV. and celebrate his *Death*, than these? When  
 we come to commemorate his *Sufferings*  
 and *Death* with the same *Graces* on our  
 Minds, with which he endured them; must  
 not this recommend us to his Favour?  
 Must not this engage him to look most  
 auspiciously on us, to own us for his real  
 Disciples, and Friends, and Followers?  
 Is not this that *Wedding-garment* that our  
 Lord requires? Let us therefore clothe our  
 selves with it, adorn our Minds with that  
*Devotion* that *Resignation*, that *Charity*, that  
 mutual *Forgiveness*, that when our King  
 cometh to survey his Guests, we may not  
 be rejected, but approved of in his Sight.  
 And how great will be the Blessing of  
 this? The Application of all the Bene-  
 fits of his Passion to our Souls, Pardon  
 of our Sins, spiritual Assistance of Grace,  
 Union with him here, which can never  
 fail of raising us, both in Soul and Bo-  
 dy, to a Life of immortal Happiness and  
 Glory with him for ever. That we may  
 so commemorate his *Death*, as to enjoy those  
 great Blessings, God of his infinite Mercy  
 grant! &c. Amen.

28 JY 58

F I N I S.

at,  
en  
ngs  
our  
uft  
ur?  
oft  
eal  
rs?  
our  
our  
that  
that  
ing  
not  
ght.  
g of  
ene-  
rdon  
ace,  
ever  
Bo-  
and  
may  
thofe  
mercy